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THE

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF

ATONEMENT,

PROPOSED TO

CAREFUL EXAMINATION.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN APPENDIX;

CONTAINING A VIEW OF CONSEQUENCES, RESULTING FROM A DENIAL OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

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Ought not CHRIST to have suffered these things?—LUKE xxiv.26.
Without shedding of blood is no remission.—HEB. ix. 22.

SECOND EDITION.

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PREFACE.

AMONG the several doctrines of divine revelation, that of the *Atonement* holds a place of principal importance; and, has so evident a connection with the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, that they will be found, on careful inquiry, to stand or fall with *it*. *This* lies at the bottom of that system of sentiments which principally distinguishes *Christianity* from *mere natural religion*. With *this* are connected the doctrines of the *Divinity of Christ, justification by an imputed righteousness* and the *perpetuity of punishment* in the future world. For, if the doctrine of *Atonement* be given up; that of the Divinity of Christ will no longer be maintained: As we can hardly believe that a God ever came into the world to perform a work which did not require the perfection and power of *a God;* or, that he came to reveal in words, and enforce by example, a system of doctrines, which might have been as perfectly revealed, and as completely exemplified, by a *mere creature*. If there be no atonement for sin, the *repentance* of sinners must be the sole

ground on which they are pardoned and saved; And, consequently, no other righteousness than their own is, in any sense, the ground of acceptance in the sight of God. If, moreover, the *moral law*, that perfect rule of divine government, will admit *penitents* to favour, without any atonement; it will hardly be believed that the disposition, in the governor of the world, which such a law, so constructed, and so understood, will naturally exhibit; can ever admit of his inflicting *eternal torments* on any of his creatures. For, if the offence of the sinner be no greater, in the view of God, than may be overlooked merely upon the consideration of his *repentance*, and, not only wholly overlooked, but the transgressor be treated with every mark of *friendship* and *favor:* Who will believe that there is *displeasure* enough existing in the divine mind, ever to inflict *eternal torments?* For *God* to make such a distinction between one who confessedly spends this short life *chiefly* in sin, and one who spends it wholly so; and *that*, too, when the crimes of the former, as the case may be, and many times *in fact* is, greatly exceed those of the latter; naturally surpasseth all belief.

Therefore, he that renounceth the doctrine of *Atonement*, to be consistent with himself, must, also, renounce those of the *Divinity of Christ*, and the *eternity of punishment*. And, when these three grand points are given up, there is nothing left, in the system of revealed truth, materially to distin-

guish it from mere natural religion: And a crucified Christ will no longer appear to be the *power of God* and the *wisdom of God*.

For *this* reason it is that the doctrine of *Atonement* has ever been a *rock of offence* to the enemies of divine Revelation. Because it stands in *this* connection, and so evidently implies, both the Divinity of Christ, and the eternity of punishment; many have labored, with their whole strength, to subvert it. But, if *this* falls, it falls like a strong man; pulling down with it, the very pillars of Christianity.

These considerations, it is hoped, will be a sufficient apology for an attempt to vindicate this great doctrine, and set it in its true and scriptural light. Of the success with which the design is executed, in the following pages; the candid, intelligent reader must judge. I can only say that a desire to support *an hypothesis* has not, that I am sensible, *glossed* any of those passages of Scripture, which I have had occasion to consider, in the discussion of the subject. I pretend not, however, to be free from those prepossessions which are common to sinful men.

But the following treatise, imperfect as it is, with all due deference, is humbly offered to public view; in hope that it may be the occasion of throwing some small degree of light on so important a subject. No caution, it is readily seen, is necessary to be given to any one, against receiving any thing that

is contained in it, upon the mere authority of the writer. If what of truth may be contained in the following examination of the Scripture Doctrine of Atonement, may gain admission into the minds and hearts of such as shall be at the trouble of perusing it; this will be the utmost that can reasonably be asked, or desired by the Author.

Stockbridge, 14th April, 1785.

THE

DOCTRINE

OF

ATONEMENT, &c.

CHAP. I.

Observations respecting God's chief end in the creation of the world.

ONE principal difficulty in understanding this great and fundamental doctrine, probably consists in our ignorance of the necessity of it. So long as we discern no *necessity of an atonement* for sin, in order to forgiveness, the *nature and import of it* will be unintelligible. And the reason why an atonement for sin is necessary, will not be seen, without some just and general view of the great end for which God originally gave birth to Creation.

THOUGH unassisted reason might be very unequal to the determination of so important a question, divine revelation hath abundantly supplied the defect; in forming our sentiments on a question of such moment, it becomes us to be especially careful that we do not pervert nor go aside from the instructions of the word of God. Taking Revelation for our guide, we need not be afraid to enquire into things which are above the reach of mere natural reason. And, by these unerring oracles we are unquestionably authorised to conclude, that *a display, or manifestation, of his own*

*true and infinitely holy character, was the chief and ultimate end which God had in view, in creation.**

For God to manifest his own proper character is, invariably, to manifest something that is excellent. Wherever we discover the divine character, we see something that is excellent. To say, therefore, that a manifestation of his own true and holy character was God's chief and ultimate end in creation, is no more than saying, in the language of scripture, that he made all things for his *pleasure*, for his *glory*, or for his *great name's sake*. It is the pleasure, and the glory of God, to make some external exhibition of his own inherent perfection; and, to discover to his creatures his own proper character, which is, in itself, infinitely excellent. God evidently designed to exhibit an external image, or portraiture of his own infinite mind, in which its beauties and excellences might be seen by his creatures. But the excellences of Mind, we are all sensible, can be discerned by others, only in the external expressions of its capacity and disposition, or temper. So that we have no where to learn the divine character, but in his works, taken in connexion with his word.

As we all agree that God is most eminently *good*, it is evident that the real disposition of his infinite mind doth not appear, excepting in works of goodness, and where some good is actually done. His true character, therefore, cannot otherwise be manifested than in doing good. Consequently, a manifestation of the proper character of God, will necessarily comprehend all the good, all the created felicity, which he ever had it in design to bring about; and, which will ever be accomplished.

* For a particular enumeration of passages of Scripture in proof of this point, see the late President Edwards on God's last end in the creation of the world.

THAT the chief and ultimate end which God had in view in creation, was a manifestation of his own true and proper character, may appear from these two considerations, viz.

I. WE can conceive of no other end which the supreme Being could have in view in this great work. The motives for God to *create*, must, of necessity, all be within himself. No motive could be derived from any thing out of himself; for no such thing had any existence. And, to say that creation itself, or any thing created, was the motive in the divine mind, to creation; is but going in a circle; and leaves us as ignorant of the *end of creation* at the close of our inquiry, as at our first setting out.

To say that the happiness to be produced by creation, was God's primary end in giving birth to it, supposes that the Creator is essentially of a disposition to be pleased with the happiness of his creatures. This must be true, in order that the happiness of creatures might be a motive to him to create. And, if God is essentially possessed of a disposition of this kind of sufficient strength to induce him to *create*; He neither needed, nor in the nature of things could have, any motive from without himself, to this great work. In this case the disposition to produce and diffuse happiness, must, itself, be the motive to the work of creation; and, not the hitherto uncreated happiness. And, if this disposition were not originally of such strength, as necessarily to flow out in its natural effects; there neither was, nor could be, any thing in the universe, to give it new strength, and draw it forth into action. If the disposition to produce and diffuse happiness were not, itself, the motive to creation; we can conceive of nothing to give spring to it, and set it in motion: And, it must, of course, remain utterly unaccountable that ever God made the world.

THE object of the divine mind, in creation, could not be really to add to himself, or increase his own fulness: For, his being and fulness were already infinite; and, of course, beyond a possibility of increase. It remains, therefore, that to diffuse that infinite and unbounded fulness which he possesseth in himself, must have been the primary and original end of creation. And, this is nothing different from saying that *a manifestation of his own true character, was the chief and ultimate end which God had in view, in creation.*

II. THERE could, in the nature of things, be no higher or more excellent end of Creation, than a manifestation of the true character of God. As the divine character is in itself, transcendently excellent; so are all the manifestations of it in the exercises of his perfections: And, in these exercises and manifestations, there is greater beauty, than in all created virtue together. And as there is a beauty in the exercises and displays of the divine perfections, infinitely superior to all created excellency and beauty; there is, also, proportionably greater felicity in the divine mind, in these exercises, than can possibly exist in all creatures. Consequently, it is, in itself, the most desirable thing that can be conceived, that God should exercise and display his own glorious perfections. Every thing which is either desirable, or beautiful, in creatures, is found in an infinitely higher degree in the exercises of the inherent perfections of the divine mind. And, these exercises are naturally accompanied with infinitely greater good, than the united exercises of all created power and virtue together. To say that the beauty and worth of the exercises of God's perfections, consist principally in the virtue and happiness which they produce in creatures, is to make the virtue and happiness of God, himself, of less worth and importance than those of his creatures. And, this is the same as to say that *finite* virtue and happiness, are of more worth than *infinite.*

THE *effects* of the exercise and display of God's perfections, are the virtue and happiness of creatures. But if the virtue and happiness of creatures, are of real worth; that same kind of virtue and happiness existing in an infinitely higher degree, in the Creator, is infinitely more so. And therefore, the exercise and manifestation of the divine perfections is an object, in itself considered, of infinitely greater importance than the good of the creature.

THOUGH the created beauty and good which are the natural effects of the exercise and manifestation of the divine perfections, must of necessity be considered as connected with these manifestations: The objects, nevertheless, are two; and, capable of an entirely distinct consideration. And, as they are capable of being distinctly and separately considered, the virtue and good of the creature, must be considered only as the stream to the fountain, when compared with the virtue and happiness of God. And, consequently, the good of the creature, considered as an object in and of itself, could no more give spring to the divine perfections, and put them into exercise; than the stream which proceeds from the fountain, could put the fountain itself into motion, and cause it to overflow.

As, therefore, there could be no other, or higher end of creation, than a manifestation of the true and proper character, the real perfection of God, we may safely conclude that this was the chief and primary end which God had in view, in creating the world: And, that the cause and reason of creation is to be sought no where but in the divine mind itself——in the real, essential perfection of God.

IT being evident, then, that a manifestation of his own true and proper character, was the chief and ul-

timate end which God had in view, in creation ; these several consequences will naturally follow from it, viz.

1. THAT, all God's government will be calculated, in the best manner, to discover to his creatures, his own true character ; and, exhibit a genuine picture of it to the world. That this is, and ever will be, the case, may certainly be concluded from the unchangeable nature of God. God's works will all be carried on with the same design with which they were originally begun. His purposes are all connected, uniform, and harmonious. With Him there is no variableness, nor even shadow of turning. As he gave birth to creation with a view to display the excellencies of his own glorious character ; with the same view, and for the same desirable end, he continues, preserves and governs the world. For his pleasure they *now are*, as well as originally *were* created. All that God *says*, and all that he *does*, have one uniform and glorious object in view. And his government is as true a picture of his character, as his *moral law*, which is frequently and justly stiled a transcript of the divine perfections. Accordingly, we may forever expect to see his mind written, and his character as indubitably expressed, in what he *does*, as in what he *says*—in the government which he *exercises*, as in the law which he *has given*. For, with the same uniform design he creates, gives law, and administers government.

THE same glorious design which is expressed in creation, will be invariably expressed in preservation : For, in strictness of speech, *preservation* is no more than *creation continued*. What gave birth to the existence of creatures, will direct in the government over them. And should we entertain a thought that God's moral government will not be eternally administered in such a manner as to express, to the best advantage, his true character ; we must at once admit, either that

he has changed his original scheme, or that the government of so vast and complicated a system is become too unwieldy for its great and original Creator: Either of which suppositions is atheistical and absurd.

2. From the preceding observations it will follow that the *good of the creature*, in itself considered, was not the chief and principal end of creation. However closely a *manifestation of the divine perfection* and the *good of the creature* may be connected together: they are still capable of being viewed as distinct objects, in many respects infinitely diverse from each other. Though it be readily granted that God's ends are answered *in the good of the creature;* nevertheless, the designs and purposes of God, and *that* wherein these purposes and designs are accomplished, are as perfectly two, as any different objects whatever. A parent's whole pleasure may be in the good of the child: nevertheless, the *parent's pleasure* and the *child's good*, are two objects, capable of entirely distinct and separate consideration. And however closely they may be connected together, the very supposition of their *connection* implies that they are *two;* and therefore, capable of being separately considered. So, however closely the *glory of God*, or a manifestation of his true and proper character, and the *good of the creature*, may be connected together; the objects are, nevertheless, in nature really two; and entirely capable of distinct consideration. And, if in nature *two*, one may have a primary and original influence in the divine works, rather than the other. But, the more important one, or that in which there is the greatest degree of weight, excellency, and worth, every thing concurs to prove would indeed be the object of chief consideration. As much more beauty and worth, therefore, as there are in the real exercises and displays of the divine perfections and character, than in the created fruits of

them in creatures; (however close and inseparable the connection may be between these different objects) so much more is the *former* an original and chief end of God in creation, than the *latter*.

3. It follows, from what has been said, that God will take effectual care, that in all his administration, the majesty, the superior dignity of his own infinitely excellent character, shall be fully and perfectly preserved. Since God made the world for the sake of displaying his own true character, we may rest assured that he will take effectual care that the glory and dignity of it be effectually preserved in the view of all his creatures. Nothing will ever take place in the divine government that will have a tendency finally to sink the character of God, in the view of his creatures: But, on the other hand, in his progressive administration, it will continually rise higher and higher, appear more and more respectable, and be clothed with greater majesty and glory. Every part of the divine conduct, will certainly be such as to demand the highest veneration and esteem, and tend in the view of all intelligencies, to increase that infinite distance which really subsists between him and all created beings.

No part of the divine conduct will ever be such as naturally tends to represent in diminutive light, his hatred of all opposition to the good for which he made the world, or his abhorrence of rebellion and wickedness. For this would not exhibit his true character, but the reverse; this would not correspond with his oracles, his verbal declarations, but contradict them. We may therefore certainly conclude, on the other hand, that in God's progressive dealings with his creatures, that transcendantly excellent and glorious disposition of the divine Mind, whereby he holds all moral evil in the greatest possible abhorrence, will be continually appearing in more lively and glowing colours.

To suppose that this will certainly be the case, is perfectly correspondent with what the holy Scriptures teach us must originally have been the design of God in giving existence to moral creatures. While, on the other hand, should the divine government, in its progressive steps, impress the minds of creatures, with no deeper and more affecting sense of his infinite purity and hatred of iniquity; the whole moral character of the great Governor of the world must, of necessity, suffer; and appear not uniform, nor wholly without defect.

CHAP. II.

An inquiry into the original ground of the necessity of an Atonement, in order to the forgiveness of sin.

THE original design of God, in the creation of the world, will naturally lead us to suppose that a disposition to exhibit his character in its true colours, was the cause of his requiring an atonement for sin, before he would exercise pardoning mercy. Since this was God's original end in creation; this must, also be the governing principle in all his future administration. Of course, therefore, the true reason why God required an atonement for sin was, that *the real disposition of his own infinite mind, toward such an object, might appear; even though he pardoned and saved the sinner:* Could the character of God, the disposition of the divine mind both toward holiness and sin, otherwise appear to equal advantage; there is not the least reason to imagine that he would ever have required an atonement: Because God will never be at expense, where no advantage is gained. But, to say that *this* is the consideration which originally made an atonement necessary; is the same as to say that the necessity of it in order to a proper exercise of mercy, arose

from the very nature of the divine character, and the essential perfection of God. For it is the essential perfection of the divine nature, and the genuine character of God, that are to be displayed in all his works and government.

It is reasonable to suppose that God required an atonement for sin, that his creatures might be sensible of the abhorrence he has of it, notwithstanding the forgiveness he is pleased to exercise toward the sinner. The end which God had in view in the creation of the world, forbids the exercise of mercy toward sinners, in such a way as naturally tends to diminish the ideas of their infinite guilt and ill desert in his sight. As the real aversion of the divine mind from sin is infinite, it evidently became his character to adopt some measures in his providence, effectually to convince his creatures that this aversion still subsists, in all its strength, even though he pardons the sinner. Otherwise, the character of God would, of necessity, be misapprehended by his creatures; and the nature of his mercy be misunderstood.

We may confide in it that nothing will ever take place in the divine government, which will tend to render the spotless holiness of God in the least degree suspicious; or represent him less an enemy to sin, than a friend to virtue. And that, in order to this, there was originally in the nature of things, a necessity of an atonement, before mercy could be exercised in the pardon of the sinner; will appear from the following considerations, viz.

I. Should God pardon *absolutely*, or without adopting measures, at the same time, to convince his creatures of his infinite hatred of iniquity; his regards to the good of the great community over which he

presides, would necessarily appear to his creatures to be defective.

It is essential to the goodness of a Governor, or King, to guard the rights, secure the peace, and promote the prosperity of his subjects. No one can be called a good Governor, who doth not exercise his supremacy and authority, in framing and executing laws for the protection and safety of his subjects. It is as essential to the character of a good Ruler, to punish vice, as to reward virtue; to avenge the wrongs of his subjects, as to secure their interests: Yea, the *former* is essential to the *latter;* since, only the fear of punishment restrains wicked men from violence. Should a ruler suffer crimes to go unpunished; the laws, however good and righteous in themselves, would presently lose their authority; and government fall into contempt. Laws have no force, any further than they are carried into execution; and authority loses its respect whenever it ceases to be exercised. Whenever the supreme Magistrate neglects the execution of the laws, he loses the confidence of the people; and his regard to the public welfare becomes suspected. No one can confide in his public spirit, when he suffers the disturbers of the peace to go unpunished: For ideas of true regard to public good, as necessarily connect punishments with crimes, as rewards with virtue.

The confidence of a community in the character of a Governor, arises, in a great measure, from the apprehensions they have of his sincere, benevolent regards to the general good. And they can no further confide in his regards to the public good, than they believe him to be averse from every thing that injures the public. As, it is impossible that the *love of virtue*, in any being whatever, should exceed his *hatred of vice;* it is impossible for any one to give evidence of the *for-*

mer, when, the object being presented, he neglects expressing the *latter*, in ways becoming his character.

SHOULD God pardon the sinner, without taking effectual measures to minister conviction of his hatred of his sins; the evidence of his love to the public good, would necessarily be defective. This, of course, would be a mode of administration exceedingly inconsistent with his original design in the creation and government of the world. For,

II. IF God should pardon sin without an atonement, he could not be believed to hate iniquity.

THE views which God has of the characters of his creatures, and the affection of his mind respecting them, can be no where so clearly seen as in the treatment he actualy gives them. God is a spirit invisible to men; and, cannot be known intuitively by his creatures. We can see him only in his word and works; and, when we consider him as the parent and fountain of all being and good; and ourselves as the mere creatures of his power, most absolutely dependent on him; it will be natural for us to suppose that his *ultimate treatment of us* affords the best rule whereby we may judge of the light in which he views our characters; and of the disposition he entertains towards us. And though *words* are significant, they are yet less so than *actions*. It is a common, and a just observation, that actions speak louder than words: Yea, a maxim on which we so firmly rely, that we give the whole weight to the former, when they contradict the latter. All agree that the mind and will of God may be intelligibly expressed in words. Yet, no one will deny that they may be written in much deeper and more legible characters, in the sensible pleasures and pains which he may bestow, or inflict upon us. Therefore, the evidence of God's love of virtue, and his hatred of

vice, must ultimately be derived from the treatment he gives his creatures. In this we ultimately and most sensibly, discover his view of the characters of his creatures, and the estimation in which he holds them: And, in this we most clearly discover the feelings of the divine mind toward virtue and vice.

If the views which the supreme Being entertains of *characters*, and the feelings of his mind towards those who sustain them, are most clearly discovered in the *treatment* of his creatures; in the natural good and evil he ultimately brings upon them: Then, of course, where the treatment is the same, we are to judge that the feelings, the disposition, of the divine mind toward the objects, are also the same: What but this can be the rule of our judgment? If God's treatment be the best and ultimate rule of judging; then, similar treatment authorises us to believe that he holds all the subjects of it in equal estimation; and is equally pleased, or displeased, with one, as with another. If God should treat the virtuous and vicious alike, from whence could we infer his approbation of the former, or his abhorrence of the latter? If his treatment of them, in his government be the same; then, either his government fails of expressing his proper character, or his character is not uniform and perfect. And, if God's *actions and conduct* toward his creatures, do not truly express his character, his mind and will, how shall we know that his *word* does? And by what methods can we ever come to the knowledge of the divine character?

Further; if the treatment God gives his creatures, in his providence, the natural good and evil he confers upon them, be not ultimately a certain rule whereby to judge of his disposition towards them and the views he has of their characters; the consequence will be,

that we cannot infer *difference* of character in the subjects, from the *different treatment* they receive at the hand of God. And, if this be the case, then natural evil will, in no case whatever, be a proof of God's displeasure, any more than natural good, a proof of his approbation and favor. And thus shall we be left perfectly in the dark, as to the divine character; having no sure interpreter of the will of God, either in his word, or in his providence.

But, if the natural good and evil which God ultimately confers on his creatures, be a certain rule whereby we may judge of the views which he entertains of their characters; it would be inconsistent to suppose that he should ever pardon a sinner, without any atonement; or without taking some effectual methods, in his providence, to discover his infinite hatred of their characters and actions. If the providences of God are expressions of *his own character*, it is inconceivable that he should not in some way or other, in his providence, express the views and feelings of his mind toward the characters and conduct of sinners. But, if the natural good and evil that are ultimately, and on the whole, brought on creatures, are sure and certain indications of the divine disposition toward them; then, the abhorrence in which God holds the characters of sinners, must of necessity be expressed in some other way, than in evil finally brought upon the sinner himself; in order that his salvation may be consistent with the end of God in the creation of the world, and the invariable rule of his providence, whereby he expresses his own character to the views of his creatures. For, unless this should be done, the pardon and salvation of a sinner, leave us to an utter uncertainty with respect to the divine character itself; whether God were an hater of iniqnity; and, of course, whether a lover of righteousness.

If God should pardon the sinner, without taking some sufficient and effectual method, at the same time, to discover his infinite hatred of iniquity; if he should treat the clean and the unclean, the virtuous and vicious, alike; we should have no means left whereby to determine that he held their characters in any different estimation; and, either approved, or disapproved the one, more than the other. Therefore, such a mode of providence would be inconsistent with the end which God had in view, both in the creation and government of the world; which was to manifest his own glory, and to display his own infinitely holy and virtuous character.

III. The government of God could not be respectable, should he pardon the sinner, without discovering, at the same time, his infinite hatred of his sins; and the perfect abhorrence he hath of his character.

The supreme Being cannot be *regarded* as a governor, any further than he is believed to hate iniquity. And he cannot be believed to hate iniquity, when it actually takes place among his creatures, any further than his hatred is, in some way or other, expressed. But, if God, in his providence, should treat the virtuous and the vicious alike; making no difference between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the profane; if he should confer the same good upon the one, as upon the other, taking no measures in his providence, to show that he regarded the character of the one, in any different light from that of the other: his government would, of necessity, lose its force, and be no restraint upon his creatures.

No one can *respect* a government which provides no punishment for the wicked. And, whatever punishments be provided by *law*, if the executive authority neglect the execution, the government must, of neces-

sity, fall into contempt. No sooner, therefore, will God cease to discover his hatred of the rebellion and wickedness of his creatures, than he loses his authority, and renders his benevolence and good-will justly suspicious. But if the treatment God gives his creatures, in the good and the evil he confers upon them, be sure indications of the views he entertains of their characters; for him to pardon the sinner without an atonement, or without taking some effectual measures to discover his hatred of his sins; must necessarily injure his character, weaken his authority, and bring his government into contempt.

IV. For God to pardon the sinner without an atonement, would be inconsistent with the true spirit and import of his holy law.

If God's written law expresseth his true character, and is a genuine transcript of his moral perfection; we may confide in it that his whole government will be administered in perfect conformity to it. The government of God can no more vary from the true import of the law, than God can vary from himself. If the moral law expresses the true character of God, his moral government will express the same, and will therefore be perfectly of a piece with the law.

Respecting the written moral law, we are to note the following things, viz.

1. That it abounds with pains and penalties, and those too of a very awful nature; threatning death, even eternal destruction, for every transgression. It curseth every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* It makes no provision for pardon, and gives not the least hope of mercy, in any case, or on any condi-

* Galat. iii. 10.

tion whatever: But most explicitly and unconditionally condemns every transgressor, without one exception, to everlasting misery. That this is the unequivocal language of the law, it is presumed no one will deny. *This* is the law which expresseth the true character of God which is a transcript of his essential moral perfection. This is a law which expresses the mind and will of God, the very feelings of his heart.

2. The penalties, or sanctions of the law, express an exceeding high degree of righteous anger and indignation, in the divine mind, against the sinner. They express *in words* that same displeasure which will appear in *effects* in the eternal torments of sinners. When God actually inflicts eternal torments on the sinner, he will no more than *act out* the same disposition, or character, which is expressed in *words* in the threatnings of the law.

If the threatnings of the law do not express divine anger, it is impossible for *words* to do it. If these do not paint displeasure, it is not in the power of *language* to paint it. If the *language* of the divine law is equivocal, the *providences* of God may be equally so: And all those dreadful punishments which will hereafter be inflicted on his enemies, will not afford unequivocal evidence of the real indignation of God. For eternal torments inflicted on sinners, by the great Governor of the world, express nothing in *action*, but what the threatnings of the law express in *words*.

3. We are to note that the principal importance of the *penalty*, as well as of the *precepts* of the law, consists in its expressing the real character of God. What, above every thing else, makes the penalties of the law necessary and important, is, that they express the purity of the divine mind, and his unaker-

able and infinite aversion from all iniquity. This is the grand consideration which makes punishments necessary in the divine government. The misery of a creature, merely in itself, answers no valuable end: And were it not a glass in which God's infinite hatred of sin is seen, it never would be inflicted. As the great end of God in all his other works, is to manifest his own excellent character; so it is in inflicting punishments upon offenders. And no further than punishments answer the end of exhibiting a disposition that really hath existence in the divine mind, will they ever be inflicted.

Now if it be true that the *law* represents the Governor of the world as being indeed angry, and that in a very high degree with the sinner; it is easy to see that his *government* would not correspond with it, should he pardon the transgressor without exhibiting at the same time, in a sensible manner, his righteous anger against him for his sins. A method of administration which *exhibits anger against sin*, is directly counter to that which *doth not exhibit anger against it*. If, therefore, the divine law denounces curses against the sinner; and as far as words can do it, exhibits divine anger against him; it is manifest that the forgiveness of the sinner, without testifying, at the same time, in some proper and convincing way, an abhorrence of his character and wickedness, would counteract both the letter and the manifest import of the divine law:—Unless *pardoning* and *punishing*, doing *good* and doing *evil* to the creature, naturally express one and the same view of his character and deserts; and the same degree of pleasedness or displeasedness with him. It is hence evident, that it could not have been consistent with that character of God which is exhibited in the law, to pardon the sinner without an atonement; unless *disregarding crimes* and *punishing* them, treating the same per-

sons, and that too under the same circumstances, as *friends* or as *enemies*, uniformly exhibit one and the same excellent character.

When God has devised a method in his providence, wherein he exhibits sensible conviction of his hatred of iniquity; the pardon of the sinner cannot counteract the spirit of that law which exhibits the same disposition, in the divine mind, towards the offender: Especially when the great end and excellency of the law consists in its making a true exhibition of the divine moral character; and *this* is the great consideration which makes it important that government should be administered in conformity to the law. In whatever method an uniformity of character with what originally appears in the law, is preserved in administration, the ends of divine government are answered, and the honor of the lawgiver secured. But unless dispensing rewards and punishments indiscriminately to the *good* and to the *bad*, naturally exhibits the same character, and pictures the same disposition which appears in the *promises* and in the *threatnings* of the law; it must of necessity be consistent with the law, to pardon the sinner without an atonement; or without ministering, at the same time, effectual conviction of God's infinite hatred of his sins.

If it be not necessary to the honor of the divine character and government, that God should exhibit his wrath in some sensible fruits against sinners, it is not necessary that he should threaten it. Nothing need be threatened in the law, which is not necessary to be exhibited in government. Uniformity of character cannot require that anger should be expressed in *words*, where there is no necessity of exhibiting it in fruits in *government*. For in cases wherein it is not necessary to the honor of the divine character, to witness anger by sensible fruits, it cannot be that an-

ger should exist in the divine mind. And to suppose that God threatens his creatures with his anger, in cases wherein he hath in reality no anger against them; at once denies the moral law to be an expression of the mind and will of God—a transcript of his moral perfection. But it is obvious, at first view, that the act of *pardoning*, that is, saving a person, and receiving him to the enjoyment of the everlasting favor of God, doth not in itself discover any anger or wrath: Consequently, consistently with the moral law, this never can be done without God's exhibiting his anger against the sinner, in sensible fruits, in some other way.

FURTHER; for God to save sinners of mankind without an atonement, would suppose the *law* and the *gospel* to speak a different language, and exhibit characters exceedingly diverse, one from the other. It would make the former breathe nothing but indignation, where the latter speaks nothing but peace, comfort and good. And therefore, on this supposition, the gospel, instead of establishing, would make void the law.

IT hence appears to be as essential to the honor of the divine government, and to an uniformity of character in God, that he should exhibit anger in sensible fruits against sin, in every instance wherein it takes place; as that, in sensible fruits, he should exhibit his approbation of righteousness. God hath as real displeasure against sinners, as he hath approbation of the righteous: The former is as essential to the perfection and glory of the divine character, as the latter. That the *government* of God, therefore, may express his real character, and *that*, too, in the same point of light in which it is exhibited in the law; it is as necessary that he should express anger against the sin-

ner, in his administration of government, as approbation of the righteous.

THEREFORE is it necessary, in order to a consistent exercise of mercy, that the honor of the law should be maintained: and that the government of God, in every instance, should be expressive of the same disposition which the law, taken in all its parts, naturally exhibits. It is necessary that the supreme Ruler of the universe should appear, in his administration, equally to respect the *penal* as the *preceptive* parts of his law; and, pay as much regard to the threatnings of *punishment*, as to the promises of *reward*. And in whatever way this is done, in God's conduct toward his creatures, the ends of divine government are answered; and, all the good effected which naturally flow from a display of his true and proper character.

THE penalties of the law, we are to remember, *express* the *displeasure* of the lawgiver *in the pain and sufferings of the transgressor*. But however closely and inseparably these two objects may be connected together: they are yet really two, and capable of an entirely distinct and separate consideration. And, as these objects are *two*, they are in themselves considered, of very different importance; and of course, the penalties of the law must be of infinitely greater importance as being expressive of God's *righteous displeasure against sin*, than as bringing *pain and torment on the sinner*. Accordingly, the great ends of divine government, which are to make a true and proper exhibition of the divine character, cannot be answered, whatever be the fate of the sinner, without convincing testimonies to the world, of God's infinite purity and hatred of iniquity. The clearer views we have of the importance of the divine character, and of the original designs of the Supreme Being in the creation of the world; the more sensibly shall we discern

the necessity of an atonement, in order to the exercise of pardoning mercy: And, the more clearly shall we discover the inconsistency of forgiveness with the true spirit and import of the law, unless full conviction be exhibited, in the moral government of God, of his infinite hatred of iniquity.

FROM this view of the necessity of an atonement, in order to a consistent exercise of mercy, the following observations naturally flow, viz.

1. THAT the honor of the divine law, agreeably to the true spirit and import of it, is fully preserved in the government of God, when his displeasure against sin is made to appear, to equal advantage, as it doth in the execution of the penalties of the law; *in whatever way it be done.* And it appears on the other hand, that whatever method of administration would throw a veil over God's hatred of iniquity, and render it more obscure to the views of creatures than it would be in the execution of its penalties; would dishonor the law itself; and naturally tend to bring it into contempt. The law is really honored, when that character of God which is exhibited in the various parts of it, is supported and maintained in his government. Therefore, the penalty of the law is really answered, and its demands satisfied, whenever God's hatred of iniquity is as clearly exhibited in acts of government, as it is expressed in the language of the law, *in whatever way this be done.* The law of God is satisfied and its penalties answered *in the final condemnation of the sinner*, only because the true character of God is herein visibly manifested, and his just displeasure against iniquity clearly discovered: At least, this is the most important and valuable end that is answered by the sinner's final destruction. Were not this the case, the execution of punitive justice would not be to the glory of God; because it would not serve to

display the true beauties of his infinitely excellent and glorious character.

THAT the moral character of God should be truly delineated in his government, is what is of primary and principal importance ; because with this is certainly connected the order, the harmony and the greatest good, of the universe. The character of God being infinitely excellent, and in itself most perfectly harmonious ; when it is truly delineated in his government, must of necessity be productive of the greatest good and harmony among his creatures. To manifest the real excellencies of the divine character, therefore, it was that the law was originally given ; and, for the same end was it established by such awful sanctions. The honor of the law of course is evidently maintained, and the ends of government answered, when that character, with which the supreme Ruler invests himself in the various parts of his law, is exhibited and supported in administration. So that whenever God's just and real displeasure against sin, is exhibited in some other way, to equal advantage as it would be in the final destruction of the sinner ; atonement is then made for his sins, and a door opened for the exercise of pardoning mercy.

2. IT would be as inconsistent with the design of God, in the government of the world, to suffer the sins of his creatures to pass unnoticed, as their virtue to go unrewarded. The end of God in his moral government, as much requires that he should testify his hatred of iniquity, as his love of holiness. And if the moral government of God be designed truly to delineate his character ; if we are here to expect a sensible discovery of the feelings, the disposition, of his own infinite mind, toward the several characters of his creatures ; it must appear, every way, as inconsistent for God to neglect expressing his righteous displeas-

ure against *vice;* as his approbation of *virtue:* God's *hatred* of the former, is as real and immutable, as his *love* of the latter. That mode of administration, therefore, toward sinners, which would not sensibly delineate and express the former, would no more comport with the character and designs of God, than that which should leave the latter undiscovered.

If these things are so, it will be as inconsitent with the attributes of God, and the great end which he hath in view in the government of the world, to suffer *one sin* to pass without expressing in some convincing manner his hatred of it; as to suffer virtue to go unrewarded. Not only so, but it will, on these principles, be essential to the divine glory, that the moral government of God should be as *full and sensible an expression* of his abhorrence of *every impure character* among his creatures, as of his approbation of the conduct of *all such* as never rebelled against him. If the moral government of God should not be administered in such a manner as sensibly to express this to the views of his creatures; it would not exhibit his *true character*, the real and infinitely excellent disposition of his own holy mind.

3. It appears from what hath been already observed, that the *Atonement* had a more immediate and direct relation to the *penal part* of the divine law.

It is unquestionably true that Christ was set forth to be a propitiation to declare God's *righteousness;* and the great ends of *righteousness* required that there should be an atonement for sin, in order to prepare the way for its remission. But it is to be remembered, it was the righteousness of God as it related to the execution of threatened and deserved punishment, that needed to be declared, in order to the exercise of pardoning mercy; and not as it related to the bestow-

ment of rewards:—Righteousness, as it respected rendering vengeance to enemies; not favour and protection to friends. God's favor for the righteous, and his approbation of *their* characters, would not have been rendered suspicious by a total neglect to execute punitive justice;—unless, indeed, his benevolent regards to *their* best interest, and his *distinguishing* approbation of *their* characters, should become suspicious, by his neglect to avenge them on their adversaries. But the very supposition of a possibility that God's benevolent regards to the righteous, should be rendered doubtful by his neglecting to punish the wicked, strongly implies that it was the righteousness of God *as it relates to the execution of punishment* that needed to be declared, in order to the pardon of the sinner.

HAD vengeance against God's enemies never been displayed; every blessing which obedience could have merited, and which in that case could have been enjoyed, might nevertheless be bestowed. So that the Deity could not justly have been impeached as being deficient in his regards to the *righteous*, had he pardoned sin without an atonement: For as far as *righteousness* in a governor relates to approving and rewarding the obedient; God might nevertheless have appeared perfectly just and righteous.

BUT with respect to *righteousness* as it relates to the execution of deserved punishment, the case is far otherwise. In this regard, when sin had actually taken place, the divine righteousness needed honor and vindication; and necssarily would need them, until it were in some sensible manner exhibited to the views of creatures. For the character of God could not fail of being reproached, as deficient both in his regards to his own authority, and in making a distinction between the holy and the unclean, had he pardoned without a

visible exhibition of his hatred of the iniquity of the sinner. And even the *obedient* part of the universe had no small interest in a display of righteousness *in this regard;* as it could not fail of contributing to their more sensible security under the government of God, and their greater and more respectful reverence of his character.

So that whatever part of the universe were concerned in the displays of divine *righteousness*, in order to the remission of sin; whether it were God himself, and his own infinitely excellent character; or the obedient and virtuous part of creation; still what more immediately and especially concerned both, was, that *righteousness* as it more directly related to the *penalties and sanctions* of the law should be exhibited and made sensibly to appear.

If it should be urged that the *righteousness of God* in the most large and general sense of the term, might have been sufficiently displayed by some lively exhibition of his regards to the *preceptive parts* of the law; because the *penal* only represent God's love of righteousness in general; still this would be no argument that the atonement did not more immediately respect the penal part of the divine law. For admitting the ultimate use of penalties to be no more than to express God's love of righteousness in general, or even his love of *obedience* still they cannot do this, any further than they are regarded and have respect paid to them in the administration of government. If the penalties of the law should not be regarded in the government of God, they could not serve to illustrate his love of obedience. For the righteousness of God, as it respects the *precepts* of the law, is as evidently discernible in his regards to the *penalties*; as his righteousness relative to the *penalties* is in his regards to the *precepts*. The Governor of the world as strongly

and sensibly manifests his love of obedience by *punishing wickedness*, as his hatred of iniquity by *rewarding virtue*. And since in the divine view the *precepts and the penalties* of the law are both necessary in order to a clear and full discovery of the character and glory of God; it is necessary that both be equally regarded in the administration of government. So that in whatever light we view the matter, it must appear of equal importance that God should manifest his respects to the *penalties* of the law *by a display of anger;* as to the *precepts* by *approbation*. And since both parts of the law are essential to its authority, and to the glory and honor of its giver; it is also necessary that the *Government* of God should appear to correspond with both; and equally necessary that he should display vengeance as bestow rawards. Therefore is it manifest that the divine righteousness, particularly as it relates to the execution of vengeance, was what peculiarly needed to be honored, in order to a consistent and justifiable exercise of mercy toward sinners.

4. As far as God's *love of righteousness* and *hatred of iniquity* can be separately viewed and distinguished from each other; the great end of the death of Christ was to exhibit the *latter* not the *former*.

THE disposition of the divine mind is perfectly uniform and harmonious. There is nothing in God, or in the disposition of his mind, but benevolence and love. Yet general goodness operates in a different manner toward different objects; and obtains different epithets, according to these severally different operations. Should we, for instance, conceive no different ideas of divine *justice* from those which we entertain of divine *mercy;* it is evident we should have no proper and adequate conceptions of *either*. Or should we form no different ideas of God's *love of virtue*, and of his *hatred of vice;* it is manifest that we should

view him as being *indifferent* to virtue and vice. Yet the very different ways in which God's *love of virtue* and *his hatred of vice* express themselves in fruits; and the extremely different effects they produce in the subjects on whom they are severally displayed, naturally lead us to view them as, in some respects, exceedingly different from each other: And *that* however obviously they discover, in their several operations, beautiful harmony and uniformity in the disposition of the divine mind.

SEEING therefore the existence of moral evil naturally furnished occasion for a display of God's *hatred of iniquity*, and evidently called for it; this would lead us to view the death of Christ as being designed more immediately and directly to make a visible discovery of the anger of God against sin.

THEREFORE, we may reasonably suppose, it is that the people of Christ are so often spoken of as being redeemed by his *blood;* as though *his life* went for *theirs*. The scriptures represent the church of *God* as being *purchased with his own blood*(*a*)—*redeemed through the blood of Christ*(*b*)—made nigh *by his blood*,(*c*) &c. So the *blood* of his cross is that by which he is said to make *peace*.(*d*) And the church above is represented as celebrating Christ for his worthiness to open the book, and disclose the future state of the church and world, because he was slain and had redeemed her to God by his *blood*.(*e*) In this view of the matter the Apostle asserts that *without shedding of blood* there is no remission.(*f*) The reason why so much efficacy is ascribed to *blood* evidently is, that it is the life.(*g*) And therefore it is that the *blood* makes atonement.(*h*)

(*a*) Acts, xx. 28. (*b*) Ephes. i. 7. (*c*) chap. ii. 13. (*d*) Colossians, i. 20. (*e*) Rev. v. 9. (*f*) Heb. ix. 22. (*g*) Gen. ix. 4. (*h*) Levit. xvii. 11.

TAKING away the life is the most strong and sensible expression of displeasure that is ever visible to us. That displeasure which puts a period to the life, we view as of the highest kind. Therefore doth the *death* of Christ more directly exhibit the *anger* of God than his *love:* As that affection of the divine mind which is termed *anger* especially needed to be exhibited in order to a proper exercise of mercy. Virtue and goodness in the creature, furnish occasion for the exercise and manifestation of complacency and love; but vice for the display of anger. And had the occasion for the latter been omitted by the great Governor of the world, when rebellion had actually taken place, we cannot conceive how it would have been for the glory of God to pardon the sinner, or how he could have been just in justifying the ungodly.

5. IT appears from the nature of God's design in creation, and from the ground on which an atonement became necessary, that the great end of the coming and death of Christ was not to give evidence of the equity and righteousness of the moral law; but rather to exhibit in its proper colors, the disposition of the divine mind toward us for breaking it. The *righteousness of the law*, merely as a *rule*, and the *disposition of the divine mind* toward creatures who violate it; are distinct objects which are to be separately considered. The objects are as perfectly different from each other, as the *divine Mind itself* and any of those *media* or objects through which it is seen. And in regard of these two different objects, when viewed in a separate light, it is to be remembered that, in real importance, the *former* is infinitely exceeded by the *latter*. However truly, therefore, a testimony to the righteousness of God's law *as a rule of life*, might be contained in the design of the coming and death of Christ; a discovery of the divine disposition toward men for *violating* it, was what, nevertheless, made an

infinitely greater part of the design of Christ's work than the other.

To suppose that the principal design of the coming of Christ, was to exhibit evidence to the consciences of men, of the righteousness and equity of the divine law, either as a *rule* of government for God, or of conduct for us; for aught we can see, would be rather a reproach, than an honor to the divine character. For this would suppose that the law of God, though originally inscribed in the fullest manner that it could be on the hearts of men, was nevertheless of such a nature and extent that the creature could see neither the propriety of God's governing by it, nor the reason of his own obligation to obey it: And therefore, that the law of God was not originally fitted to discover the true beauties of the divine character.

No rule or law can be good, which is either above the natural abilities and power, or not suited to the situation and circumstances of the creatures who are placed under it. Such a law could not manifest the excellency of the Creator to the view of the creature. For these reasons it must be unsuitable, both as a rule of government for the former and of conduct for the latter. Both these considerations lead us to conclude that no defects of this kind could be originally attributed to the divine law. But if the moral law is in its own nature fit to be regarded by the supreme Being as a rule of government over his creatures; and by men as a rule of their own conduct; and in this way calculated to exhibit to the views of creatures the real excellencies of the divine character; it must be unquestionably true that man, in his original state, was fully capable of seeing the law to be wholly equitable and righteous. And if men were originally capable of this, it now requires, and never did, or will,

require any thing more than *candor* of mind, to enable any one to discover it.

THESE things being so, it is easy to see that conviction of the righteousness of the law might be wrought in the consciences of men, in a way infinitely less expensive than by the coming and death of the Son of God: Yea, were there no other ground of conviction in the case, this remarkable event would be far from affording it. For so long as we judge a rule itself to be *bad*, no *conduct* of any one formed upon it, will make us believe it to be *good*. While we dispute the righteousness of the rule *given* we dispute the righteousness of him who *gave it*. And in that case, his *obeying it himself* will no more convince us of its equity, than his administering government *over us* in conformity to it. We may safely conclude, therefore, that to minister conviction to the consciences of men, of the righteousness of the moral law *as a rule*, was not the principal object in view, in the coming and work of Christ.

THERE needed no such evidence as the obedience and death of Christ, of the righteousness of the moral law, either as a rule of government for God, or of conduct for his creatures. But when men had *violated* the law, there needed visible demonstration of the existence of that displeasure in the divine mind, with which the sinner is *threatened*, in order to convince the creature that the law is indeed a transcript of the divine perfection; and that it truly expresseth the mind and will of God. Otherwise the exercise of pardoning mercy would render it doubtful whether the moral law expressed the divine character, and is really *in every part* equitable, even in the view of God. The exercise of mercy, therefore, without a sensible exhibition of that divine wrath which is threatened in the law, would give abundant occasion to call in question

the perfect real conformity of the *divine will*, to that moral law which he has given us. This consequently could in no wise be for the glory of God. Once more,

6. It appears from the preceding observations that to revive *natural religion*, the knowledge of which was nearly eradicated from the human mind, was far from being the principal object of the coming and death of Christ.

To inscribe the original law of our nature on the hearts of men, is every where in scripture represented as a work of God's holy Spirit. And this holy Spirit, in these operations on the minds of men, we are taught to believe, proceeds from the *Father and the Son*; and is sent by the Father *in the name of the Son*.* It is a great and inestimable favor to have the holy Spirit sent into the hearts of men, to teach them and lead them into the truth, and revive those original notices of God and duty, which have been nearly obliterated from the human mind by the fall. And if such a favor as this could have been bestowed otherwise than as the fruit of the atonement; every other blessing which is promised in the gospel, might with equal propriety; and so sinners of mankind might have been saved without an atonement. Had there been no necessity that something should be previously done to witness God's irreconcileable aversion from sin, before such a favor could be bestowed; the holy Spirit might have been sent in his enlightening and sanctifying operations: And of course, all the valuable ends which are now actually answered *by the work of Christ and the consequent gifts of the Spirit*, might have been fully accomplished without his coming and death. Yea, all these valuable ends might have been brought about to

* See John xiv. 15, 16, 18, 23, 26; and xv. 26

much better advantage, and in a way much more to the glory of the divine character *without*, than *by* the death of Christ: Because that way of bringing about *any* good which is least expensive or attended with the least evil and suffering; is both most advantageous to the *creature*, and honorable to the *Creator*.

THAT the great end of the coming and death of Christ was to revive the knowledge of *natural religion* among men, is a supposition which, however it may *connect* the glory of God and the good of the creature, yet evidently throws the greater weight into the scale of human happiness: and is therefore inconsistent with what hath been shown to be the End of God in the creation of the world. For it represents the recovery of sinners as being *in itself* an object of greater importance, than a vindication of the injured honor of God: and implies, that, to support the dignity of the divine character as the supreme Ruler of the Universe, was a matter of inferior consideration.

THAT the government of God may appear respectable, and worthy the high dignity of his character, it is not only necessary that the great laws of his kingdom be perfectly equitable and just; but that the disposition, the spirit, of the supreme Governor appear perfectly to harmonize with them. Otherwise the government of God can no more be either honorable and glorious to himself, or safe and happy to his creatures, than the best civil laws and constitution can, to a community, when they are neglected and overlooked by the executive authority.

IN order, therefore, to support the dignity of the divine character as the supreme Governor of the world, it is exceedingly necessary that plenary evidence be exhibited to the universe, of a perfect conformity of the *divine Mind* to the whole of the moral law, the

penal as well as the *preceptive* parts of it. This, however, could not be done, nor this disposition be *delineated in the divine government*, were mercy exercised toward sinners; unless some *peculiar methods* had been adopted in divine providence, whereby God might sensibly exhibit his infinite hatred of iniquity: And *that* too as a necessary step toward the exercise of pardoning mercy.

CHAP. III.

An inquiry into the design and import of the bloody sacrifices required under the Mosaic dispensation.

IT is evident that *sacrifices* were of much earlier date than the Mosaic law. There is great reason to suppose that they were instituted by God himself, immediately after the fall, on his giving the gracious promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. These several things concur to lead us to suppose that they were originally of divine institution, viz.

THAT sacrifices were in actual use, from the earliest ages after the fall. We read that God made coats of skins, and clothed Adam and Eve,* who had made themselves naked by their sin. Now there is great reason to suppose that these skins were skins of beasts which were offered in sacrifice to God: And that as God intimated designs of mercy through Christ, to the seed of the woman, he also instituted *sacrifices* as a type of the great sacrifice which was, once for all, offered up to God by Christ; and by which sinners have access to God. Accordingly we find that, very soon, Abel brought of the *firstlings* of his flock, and

* Genesis iii. 21.

of the *fat* thereof,* and offered unto God. As early also as the times of Noah we find that the distinction of *clean* and *unclean* beasts, of such as *might* and such as *might not* be offered to God in sacrifice, was known; which could not be without a divine revelation. For when Noah entered into the Ark, he was commanded of every *clean beast* to take to himself by *sevens*.(*a*) And when he came out of the Ark, he builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every *clean beast*, and of every *clean fowl* and offered *burnt offerings* on the altar: And the Lord smelled a sweet savor.(*b*) On these several accounts the few following things may be observed, viz.

1. THAT though it be not *certain* that those beasts, the skins of which were taken to clothe our first parents, were offered in sacrifice to God; it is yet clear that *Abel* offered the firstlings of his flock in *sacrifice*; because the *fat thereof*, which was afterward, by divine appointment, peculiarly dedicated to God, was offered up. And we find that in after ages not only the fat of the beast that was offered, was particularly set apart for God,(*c*) but every *firstling of clean beasts* was to be offered in sacrifice to the Lord. Thus it was enjoined on the children of Israel respecting the firstlings of cattle and sheep, that they should remain seven days with the dam; and on the eighth day should be given to God.(*d*) God claimed a peculiar right in all the first-born: And the firstlings of unclean beasts might be redeemed; but the firstlings of a cow, or a sheep, or a goat, might not on any consideration be redeemed; but must be offered upon the altar, in sacrifice to God.(*e*) The sacrifice itself and the conformity of so many of its circumstances to the rites which were afterward expressly required by the leviti-

* Genesis iv. 4. (*a*) Genesis vii. 2. (*b*) Genesis viii. 20, 21. (*c*) Levit. iii. 16. (*d*) Exod. xxii. 30. (*e*) Numb. xviii. 17.

cal law, give great reason to suppose that Abel had the authority of a divine institution for the offering which he made to God. For,

2. THERE is not the least reason to suppose that sacrificing of beasts could have been acceptable to God, unless it had been authorized by a divine appointment. It was not until after the flood, that mankind had any right to make use of the flesh of beasts for common food. Before this God had given to man only the trees that bore fruit, and the green herb, for meat.(*f*) But after the flood, he enlarged the grant to Noah who was eminently a type of Christ; and said, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for "you; even as the green herb have I given you all "things."(*g*) Whence it appears that man's right of dominion over the beasts, particularly to make use of them for meat, is derived to him through the covenant of grace.

AND, when it is evident, from the holy scriptures, that it is only by Christ that sinners have access to God;(*h*) and that all those modes of worship, and means of access to him, which are only the fruits of human invention, are abominable in the sight of God:(*i*) there is not the least reason to suppose that it would ever have entered into the mind of Abel to offer up a *beast* in sacrifice to God; or that he could have thought that such an offering would be accepted, had he been without the authority of divine institution. And much less may we suppose, that had this bodily exercise been a piece of *will worship*, the mere fruit of his own invention, it would ever have found acceptance with God. But,

(*f*) Genes. i. 29, 30. (*g*) Genes. ix. 3. (*h*) See Rom. v. 2. Ephesians ii. 18. Acts iv. 12. (*i*) Isaiah xxix. 13. Mark vii. 7.

3. As a further evidence that Abel had divine authority for the sacrifice which he offered to God, we are expressly told that he made his offering *by faith, and thereby obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.*(*k*) His making his offering *by faith*, implies that he *believed* that he might approach his Maker in this way: For as the apostle presently asserts, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them "that diligently seek him." But it is manifest that he could not have the least reason from any consideration whatever, for *this belief*, but what was derived from some divine intimation. Wherefore Abel's faith by which he made his offering, and God's acceptance of it, and witness that he was righteous, are a sufficient stamp of divine authority for his offering. Abel made his offering by faith, just in the same sense as Moses "kept the passover by faith, and the sprinkling of blood;"(*l*) which had the express authority of a divine institution.

But be this as it may, it is sufficiently clear from the New Testament, that the sacrifices of the *Mosaic Institution* were designed to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ, that Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. This is fully proved by the Apostle, particularly in the 9th chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews. We may rationally expect, therefore, to find the design and import of *sacrifices* more fully explained, under that dispensation which was particularly intended to prepare the way for the coming and work of Christ.

It appears that the sacrifices of the levitical institution were of *two* sorts; and generally of a double import: *One* was as an atonement for sin, or a figura-

(*k*) Hebrews xi. 4. (*l*) Hebrews xi. 28.

tive way of expiating crimes; the *other* an expression of the worship and homage due from creatures to their Creator. And it was by sacrifices of the *former* kind, that men had access to God for acceptance of the *latter*.(*m*) In allusion to the legal sacrifices in this latter sense, all acts of divine worship are stiled *sacrifices*. Thus David saith, "the *sacrifices* of God are a bro-"ken spirit."(*n*) And Paul beseeches christians, by the mercies of God, to present their bodies a *living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable to God.(*o*) But the import of sacrifices in this regard, doth not particularly concern our present inquiry. As it was the bloody sacrifices for sin that typified the sacrifice of Christ, what it especially concerns us to understand, is the proper and true import of sacrifices as they were used, by divine appointment, *for making atonement for sin, or as a mean of reconciliation.*

In regard of *these sacrifices*, we find that it was established as an invariable and universal rule, that whatever was taken from the herd, or from the flock, should be brought to the door of the tabernacle; and there the offender was to lay his hand on the head of the beast which was to be sacrificed, and kill it before the Lord; and the priests were to take of the blood of the beast, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. Thus, as soon as the tabernacle was erected in the wilderness, we are told that "The LORD called unto "Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of "the congregation, saying, speak unto the children of "Israel and say unto them, if any man of you bring "an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offer-"ing of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. "And if his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, "let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer

(*m*) See more particularly, Hebrews x. 1, 2. (*n*) Psalm li. 17. (*o*) Romans xii. 1.

" it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tab-
" ernacle of the congregation before the Lord. And
" *he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offer-*
" *ing: and it shall be accepted for him to make atone-*
" *ment.* And he shall kill the bullock before the
" Lord: And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring
" the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon
" the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the
" congregation."(*p*) The law respecting a peace-offer-
ing, whether it be of the herd, or of the flock, is the same; and the same form and ceremonies are to be observed concerning it.(*q*) An atonement for sins of ignorance, whether committed by the *Priest*, by a *Ruler*, or by a *private person*, is to be made in the same way; and all the same ceremonies punctually to be observed in the offering: And if it be by the *whole congregation*, the *Elders* of the congregation are to lay their hands on the head of the bullock before the Lord.(*r*) And on the great day of yearly sacrifice, when an atonement was to be made for the whole congregation, by the offering of *two goats*, one for a *sin-offering* and the other for a *scape-goat;* the priest was to lay both his hands on the head of the scape-goat, and *confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins.*(*s*) These were statutes and ordinances to be observed by the children of Israel forever, in all their generations.

THESE institutions were expressive and significant; and the language and import of them not hard to be understood. For it is to be noted,

I. THAT the reason why the blood was so essential a part of the sacrifice, was that it eminently signifies the *life*. Accordingly, when *Cain* had slain his broth-

(*p*) Leviticus i. 1—5. (*q*) See chap. iii. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13.
(*r*) Leviticus iv. throughout. (*s*) Leviticus xvi. 21.

er, God charges the murder upon him in these words, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's "*blood* crieth unto me from the ground."(*t*) The first express law we have in the holy scriptures against murder, is also conceived in these terms, "Whosoev-"er sheddeth man's *blood*, by man shall his *blood* be "shed."(*u*) This seems to have been the reason why *blood* was excepted out of that grant which was first made to men, of the brutal creation for food. "Ev-"ery moving thing that liveth," said the donor, "shall "be meat for you; even as the green herb have I "given you all things. But flesh *with the life thereof*, "*which is the blood thereof*, shall you not eat."(*w*) The reason why blood, which is the life, might not be eaten, is given where God saith, "I will even set my "face against the soul that eateth blood, and will cut "him off from among my people. For the life of the "flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you "*upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls;* "*for it is the* BLOOD *that maketh an atonement for* "*the soul.*"(*x*) Therefore sprinkling the *blood* of the sacrifice round about upon the altar, figuratively imported the offering up of the life to the Lord upon his altar, to be consumed by fire.

II. LAYING the hand on the head of the beast that was to be sacrificed, implied *confession of sin and guilt in the sight of God.* On the great day of yearly atonement for sin, the high Priest was expressly required to "lay both his hands on the head of the scape-goat and "*confess over him all the iniquities of the children of* "*Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,* "*putting them upon the head of the goat.*" So, when any private person brought his offering for sin; and laying his hand on the head of the beast, delivered it

(*t*) Genes. iv. 10. (*u*) Genes. ix. 6. (*w*) Genes. ix. 34. (*x*) Levit. xvii. 11.

up for a burnt-offering to be made upon the altar; the several ceremonies which were to be observed in the case, clearly implied *confession of sin, and desert of evil at the hand of God.* And as the life of the transgressor is forfeited by sin, God's acceptance of the life of the beast under these circumstances, plainly contains the idea that the beast is substituted in the room of him who offers it; and that it dies and is consumed by fire on the altar of the Lord, instead of the transgressor. When it is expressly asserted that it is the *blood*, or the *life* that makes the atonement, and the sinner, whose life is forfeited, is pardoned and accepted upon his offering *the life of the beast*, over which he has confessed his own sins, on the Lord's altar, it will be exceedingly natural to suppose that the beast which is sacrificed is, by divine appointment, substituted to die and be consumed in the room of the sinner. The killing and sacrificing the beast which was brought as an offering for sin, to make atonement, together with the several ceremonies to be observed relative to it, very significantly expressed both the sinner's conviction that he himself deserved death; and his faith in the merciful acceptance of God of a substitute instead of the person of the transgressor.

III. The fire that consumed the sacrifices which were offered upon the altar, was significant of divine anger. That this was the case, appears from the following considerations, viz.

1. Nothing gives a more acute and pungent sensation of pain than fire. We have no ideas of greater bodily torment than may be produced by fire. Accordingly it is a metaphor abundantly made use of, in the holy scriptures, to express the awful nature and greatness of divine anger; and the intolerable distress it will bring on those upon whom it finally falls. No term is more frequently made use of in the word of

God, to express divine anger than *fire*. Thus the supreme Being calls upon his people, by the prophet, "circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away "the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah, and "inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my fury come forth "like *fire*, and burn that none can quench it, because "of the evil of your doings."(*y*) Again; "O house "of David, thus saith the Lord, execute judgment in "the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of "the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like "*fire*, and burn that none can quench it."(*z*) And thus the same prophet laments the evils which God, in his righteous anger had brought on his people Israel: "He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of "Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from be-"fore the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a "*flaming fire* which devoureth round about."(*a*) God exhibits his anger under the same metaphor by another of the prophets, when he says to the people, "I will "pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow "against thee in the *fire of my wrath*, and deliver thee "into the hand of brutish men, and skilful to destroy. "Thou shalt be for fuel to the *fire*."(*b*) Thus also the heathen are threatened, "Surely in the *fire* of my "jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the "heathen,"(*c*) &c. Therefore the prophet Amos exhorts, "Seek the Lord and ye shall live, lest he break "out like *fire* in the house of Joseph, and devour it."(*d*) In a variety of other places is the same metaphor made use of, in the Old Testament to express divine anger.

THE same term is abundantly used in the New Testament, both by Christ himself, and by the Apostles, to denote divine anger, and the awful effects of it

(*y*) Jeremiah iv. 4. (*z*) Jeremiah xxi. 12. (*a*) Lamentations ii. 3. (*b*) Ezekiel xxi. 31, 32. (*c*) Ezekiel xxxvi. 5. (*d*) Amos v. 6.

upon the enemies of God. Thus Christ saith to his disciples, in explaining the parable of the tares, "The "son of man shall send forth his angels, and they "shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, "and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them "into a *furnace of fire;* there shall be weeping and "gnashing of teeth."(*e*) He also exhorts, "If thy "hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to "enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to "go into hell, into the *fire* that never shall be quench-"ed; where their worm dieth not, and their *fire* is "not quenched."(*f*) And when he comes to judge the world, he will be "revealed from heaven in *fla-*"*ming fire* taking vengeance on them that know not "God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Je-"sus Christ."(*g*) When he sits in judgment, the sentence which he finally passes on his enemies will be, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting *fire*, "prepared for the devil and his angels."(*h*) And, the closing scene of all is, that "the devil who deceived "the nations, is cast into the *lake of fire and brimstone*, "where the beast and the false prophet are to be tor-"mented day and night, forever and ever."(*i*) No expression is more frequently made use of in the sacred writings to denote *divine anger*, than this. And when the anger of God is meant to be represented as exceedingly great, rising even to fury, no other metaphor is so frequently used to represent the terrible nature and awful consequences of it as *fire*. "The "mountains quake at him, and the hills *melt*, and the "earth is *burnt* at his presence, yea, the world and all "that dwell therein. Who can stand before his in-"dignation? and who can abide the fierceness of his "anger? his fury is poured out like *fire*, and the rocks "are thrown down by him."(*k*)

(*e*) Matt. xiii. 41, 42. (*f*) Mark ix. 43, 44. (*g*) 2 Thes. i. 7, 8. (*h*) Matt. xxv. 41. (*i*) Rev. xx. 10. [*k*] Nahum i. 5, 6.

AND as the term *fire*, in a great variety of instances, is made use of as a figure in the sacred writings to express divine *anger*; there is *no instance* wherein it evidently appears to be used to express *any other affection* of the divine mind. It is true that John the baptist says, "I indeed baptise you with water—but "he that cometh after me—shall baptise you with the "holy ghost, and with *fire*."(*l*) But in representing Christ in this light, the Baptist seems to have reference to the description given, by the ancient prophets, of the character of Christ. For speaking of his coming, it is said, "Who may abide the day of his com-"ing? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for "he is like a *refiner's fire*, and like fuller's soap. And "he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver,"(*m*) &c. And it was foretold that Christ should "purge "the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by "the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burn-"ing."(*n*) As *fire* is a greater purifier than *water*, for this reason it probably is that the baptism with which Christ baptiseth his people, is represented by *fire*; and this in allusion to the Jewish custom of purifying certain vessels by fire. In this passage, therefore, we find no evidence that any other affection of the divine mind than *anger*, is ever represented under the metaphor of *fire*.

2. THE final destruction of the enemies of God is represented in the holy scriptures, by those sacrifices for sin which were expressly required to be burned. The Psalmist saith, "The wicked shall perish, and the "enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs, "they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume "away.(*o*) It was an express law of God that no fat of any sin-offering should be eaten, but that it should

[*l*] Matt. iii. 11. [*m*] Malachi iii. 2, 3. [*n*] Isai. xliv. [*o*] Psa. xxxvii. 20.

all be consumed by fire on the altar.(*p*) But if the fire that burned on the altar, and consumed the sacrifices which were offered upon it, were not an emblem of divine wrath; the consumption of these sacrifices would not have been a figure of the destruction of God's enemies: And there could have been no propriety in representing the latter under the image of the former. Had not David considered the fire on the altar as a figure of divine anger, we have no reason to suppose that he would have represented the effects of this anger on the enemies of God, by the sacrifices which were offered upon the altar of burnt-offering. We have, therefore, reason to conclude that he viewed the latter as an image of the former; which he could not have done with propriety, unless the fire which consumed these sacrifices were a figure of divine anger. God himself seems to represent the matter in the same light, where it is said by the prophet, "The "sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made "fat with fatness, and with the *blood of lambs and* "*goats; with the fat of kidneys of rams:* For the "Lord hath a *sacrifice* in Bozrah, and a great slaugh-"ter in the land of Idumea."(*q*) Here the awful destruction which was coming on the Idumeans, is represented by their being made a *sacrifice;* and particularly imaged by those parts of the sin-offering which are consumed by fire, upon the Lord's altar.

THUS we see the fire which consumed the sacrifices which were offered upon the altar, represented divine anger; and was an image of the fire of divine wrath. And the holy flame, under the former dispensation, must be continually supplied, and fed with sacrifices; otherwise it would burst forth upon the people, and destroy them. So important is it that there should

[*p*] See Levit. iii. 15, 16. and vi. 30. [*q*] Isaiah xxxiv. 6.

be an exhibition of divine anger, preparatory to the exercise of pardoning mercy toward the sinner.

THE several ceremonies of the sacrifices for sin, under the levitical institution, taken together, had a language that was very significant. They implied—the divine anger against the sinner, and that in the judgment of God, the transgressor deserved to die, even that death which was the penalty of the law—that the transgressor was of the same sentiments, and entertained the same views of his own character and deserts—that he repented of his sins, and justified God and his law in condemning him—and finally that he fled to, and trusted in, the mercy of God through *an atonement wherein his righteous anger figuratively burned against him.* This seemed to be the plain and natural import of the sacrifices for sin, which were appointed by the levitical law; and of the rites and ceremonies to be observed in offering them.

IV. THE sacrifice of beasts, and the atonement thereby made for sin, was manifestly typical of the great sacrifice of *Christ*, and the atonement which *he* made for the sins of the world.

THAT the ancient tabernacle, and all the rites and forms of that worship which was performed in it, were *typical*, is clearly taught in the New Testament. For, speaking of this tabernacle, the Apostle says, it was "a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make "him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the "conscience—But *Christ* being come an high priest, "by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made "with hands, that is to say not of this building; neither by *the blood of goats and calves*, but by *his own* "*blood* entered in once into the holy place, having obtained *eternal redemption* for us." On which he

reasons thus; "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, "and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, "sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much "more shall the *blood of Christ*, who through the eter- "nal spirit *offered himself* without spot to God, purge "your conscience from dead works to serve the living "God."(*r*) We here observe that it was the *blood* of the ancient sacrifice that was particularly typical; and in *this* the figure of the great sacrifice which taketh away the sins of the world, was especially contained. It was the *blood* of the beast that cleansed from *fleshly impurity;* and it is the *blood* of Christ that purgeth *the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.* And seeing it is by *his own blood* that Christ enters into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for his people; the Apostle from thence infers that it was necessary the earthly tabernacle, and all the ancient patterns of heavenly things, should also be purified with blood.(*s*)

It is further manifest that *sin-offerings in particular* were typical of the offering which *Christ made of himself to God;* and *more eminently so* than many of the offerings that were made under the law. For it was prophesied of Christ that he should *make his soul an offering for sin;*(*t*) that is, *make himself a sin-offering.* Therefore the Apostle speaking of Christ, saith that God *hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.*(*u*) And it is evident that Christ was *made sin* in no other sense than by being made a *sin-offering.* The Apostle, also, manifestly speaks of Christ as a *sin-offering*, when he says that he "needeth not daily, as "those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his "own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did "once *when he offered up himself.*"(*w*) And he ex-

(*r*) Heb. ix. 8, 9, 11—14. (*s*) verse 23. (*t*) Isaiah liii. 10. (*u*) 2 Cor. v. 21. (*w*) Heb. vii. 27.

hibits Christ under the like character, when he says that *he was once offered up to bear the sins of many.*(x)

THESE passages sufficiently prove that *the sin-offerings* which were under the levitical institution, were particularly and eminently typical of the offering which Christ made of his life to God; and consequently that there was a correspondence of the *substance* with the *shadow*—that the *reality* was answerable to the *image*: Otherwise the Apostle could not with propriety, reason from the *latter* to the *former*.

BUT if there were an exhibition of *divine anger* in the sin-offerings, which were made under the law; we have reason to suppose there was also an exhibition of *divine anger* in the offering which *Christ made of himself for sin*. If those sacrifices, in which were contained the most lively image of divine displeasure against the sinner, were particularly and especially typical of the sacrifice of Christ; this would naturally lead us to conclude that the *sacrifice and sufferings of Christ* were a lively demonstration of the righteous displeasure of God against sinners.

CHAP. IV.

In which it is inquired whether there be not evidence that Christ died in the ROOM and STEAD of the sinner.

IT is not necessary in the present case, to inquire what that death is which the sinner must have suffered, had it not been for the atonement and intercession of Christ: Or to compare the evils which must have come upon the sinner, with those which were actually endured by Christ. But the design is to examine the

(x) Heb. ix. 28.

evidence which the holy scriptures give us that the Lord Jesus Christ did, in a strict and proper sense, die *in the room and stead of sinners.*

THIS inquiry is very necessary in order to understand the true import of Christ's death; the relation it had to the law which threatens death to the transgressor; and, the influence it hath in opening the way for mercy to be exercised toward the sinner. This will naturally lead to a better understanding of the language of so important an event, as it relates to the character and desert of the sinner; and enable us to see in what sense, and in what respects, the law of God is honored by it.

THE language, the expressions, of the sacred writings are such as, in their most plain and natural import, convey the idea of Christ's being a *substitute*, and dying in the *room* and *stead* of the sinner. And, if the terms made use of, by the inspired writers, most naturally suggest this idea; this, of course, is the light in which the subject ought really to be viewed. In order to collect the sense of the sacred writers, more satisfactorily on the subject: it may be useful to give the several modes of expression which we find in the scriptures relative to it, a distinct and particular consideration. And,

I. OUR Saviour himself tells us that he "came not "to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give "*his life* a RANSOM for many."(*y*) And the Apostle saith that Christ "gave *himself* a RANSOM for "all, to be testified in due time."(*z*) These expressions naturally convey the idea of Christ's life being given up *instead* of the sinner's—that, when the sinner was condemned by law to die, *Christ died in his room.*

(*y*) Matthew xx. 28. Mark x. 45. (*z*) Timothy ii. 6.

This is the literal meaning of the *original* terms, which are rendered, in our translation, *a ransom for many*. *Lutron anti polloon*, and *Antilutron uper pantoon*, are expressions which, in the Greek, naturally convey the idea of a *substitute*, and suppose *one* to be in the room and place of *another*. The word *lutron*, which is here translated *ransom*, properly signifies the *price of redemption*, or *that* on the gift of which, the guilty person is delivered from the punishment, or evils to which he was exposed. Thus it was a law in Israel, "Ye "shall take no *satisfaction* for the life of a murderer— "And, ye shall take no *satisfaction* for him that is fled "to the city of his refuge, that he come again to "dwell in the land, until the death of the Priest."(*a*) In both these places the *Hebrew word* which is here rendered *satisfaction*, is, in the Septuagint translation, *lutron*. When, therefore, Christ is said to have given *himself, his life* a ransom for many, (*lutron anti polloon*, or *antilutron uper pantoon*,) it must mean that *he gave up his life instead of those who were condemned to death*. And this is the same as if it had been said, he gave up his life *instead* of those who were condemned to die. The *preposition* which is here translated *for* many, or *for* all, must mean *opposition and contrariety*, or *commutation or the exchange* of one thing for another. But, it cannot be taken in the *former* sense; for then it would imply that Christ gave *himself, his life, in opposition* to the sinner, and in order to render it forever impossible that the sinner should live. It must therefore be taken in the *latter*; and, then it will imply that Christ gave his life in the *room* and *stead* of the sinner. In this latter sense is the same *preposition* used by the *Seventy*, where the king said to the prophet, in the case which he had just put to him, "if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be "*for* his life."(*b*) So Jehu said, "If any of the men

(*a*) Numbers xxxv. 31, 32. (*b*) 1 Kings xx. 39.

" I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth " him go, his life shall be *for* the life of him."(*c*) When any one is said to give *himself* a ransom for another, it is supposed that he puts himself in the place of the other. Should any one *give himself a ransom*, (*antilutron*) to redeem a *captive*, it would suppose that he *himself went into captivity*. And should any one give *himself*, *his life* a ransom for one who was condemned to die ; it would imply that he *died for him*, or *in his stead*.(*d*) The expressions under consideration manifestly imply that the *life of Christ* was the *price* of the sinner's ; and that it was given up with this view, and for this purpose.

II. THERE are other passages of Scripture in which it is not less clearly and fully intimated that Christ died *in the room and stead* of sinners.

IN this light is the case evidently represented by the Apostle, where he saith that " Christ hath once suf- " fered for sins, the just *for* the *unjust*, that he might " bring us to God.(*e*) Here we are expressly taught that Christ, *a just person* suffered *for those who are unjust*, and who *themselves* deserved to suffer. And the sufferings of Christ which are here spoken of, are not his humiliation *in being born and dwelling with men*—not the *temptations of satan with which he was beset*—not the *slanders*, *the reproaches*, *the opposition of men*, which he had to combat through the whole course of his life ; but his *death* which he suffered upon the cross. For the Apostle, when he had spoken of Christ's suffering for the unjust, in order that we might know what suffering he referred to, immediately adds " being *put to death* in the flesh, but quicken- " ed by the spirit." So that the words of the Apostle

(*c*) 2 Kings x. 24. (*d*) See Pool's Synopsis, and Dr. Whitby on the places. (*e*) 1 Peter iii. 18.

most clearly contain this assertion, viz. That *Christ suffered death for those who were condemned to die*, that he might bring them to God. And how could it be more clearly and expressly asserted, without using *the very terms themselves*, that Christ *died;* or *suffered death, in the room and stead of sinners?* Accordingly it is elsewhere asserted that "Christ died *for the* "*ungodly*—that while we were yet without strength, "Christ died for us:(*f*)—that he *bore our sins in his* "*own body on the tree*—by whose *stripes we are heal-*"*ed*—that *God hath made him to be sin for us who knew* "*no sin*(*g*)—that *he was delivered* (that is, to death) "*for our offences, delivered up for us all;*(*h*) and "that even Christ our passover is *sacrificed for us.*"(*i*) These passages import that the life of Christ was offered up *in sacrifice* for the sins of men; and that it was *by the sacrifice of himself* that he redeemed sinners from destruction; this being their *ransom*, or the price of their redemption. And all this is perfectly correspondent with the prophecies which went before concerning him: For Isaiah in the spirit of prophecy, says, "Surely he hath borne *our griefs*, and carried "*our sorrows*—he was wounded *for our transgres-*"*sions*, he was bruised *for our iniquities*, the chastise-"ment of *our peace* was *upon him*—and the Lord laid "*on him* the iniquity *of us all.*"(*k*)

FURTHER; it is expressly asserted that Christ became a *curse for us*. Paul saith that "Christ hath re-"deemed us from the curse of the law, being made a "curse for us."(*l*) These words imply that he was a *substitute* for us in *suffering*—that he *suffered evil* in our stead. Be the evils which were implied in the curse which Christ suffered, what they may, still *they*

(*f*) Romans v 6, 8. 1 Peter ii. 24. (*g*) 2 Corinthians v. 21. (*h*) Romans iv. 25, and viii. 32. (*i*) 1 Corinthians v. 7. (*k*) Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6. (*l*) Galatians iii. 13.

were evils. We cannot separate the idea of *evil*, from a *curse*, especially *the curse* of God. From those evils which are implied in the curse of the law to sinners, Christ hath redeemed his people; and from *these* he redeemed them by suffering *those evils*, whatever they were, which were implied in *the curse which he endured.* It is hence evident that Christ, in his *suffering on the cross*, was a *substitute* for the sinner. And however different the evils which Christ suffered were, from those which the sinner must have suffered had the curse of the law fallen, in its full weight upon him; still whatever evils he did actually suffer, were endured in the room and stead of sinners. For it was by *becoming* or by *being made a curse*, that Christ redeemed his people.

In *whatever way* Christ's becoming, or being made, a *curse*, was essential to the recovery of sinners; or, whatever influence it actually hath in their recovery: We have, nevertheless, sufficient authority to conclude that it *has influence* in this great event, and *is essential* to it. For if Christ's *becoming a curse* has no influence, and were not essential to the sinner's being redeemed from the curse; we can see no reason why the Apostle should so particularly ascribe our redemption to *Christ's* becoming a curse. And, the passage which is quoted from the Old Testament in the proof of *Christ being made a curse*, shows that *this* was in his *dying on the cross:* "For," says the Apostle, "it "is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a "tree." Hence it plainly appears that Christ *endured evil, suffered a curse*, and *died in the room and place* of sinners, in order to redeem them from the curse of the law. We can hardly conceive how any thing should be said which would more fully imply Christ's *suffering and dying* in the room of sinners. Christ's being made a *substitute* for sinners, and *dying in their stead*, can hardly be expressed in stronger, or more direct

terms than these,——that, he *died for the ungodly*—died *for us*—suffered the just *for the unjust*,—*bore our sins in his own body on the tree*—redeemed us from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us*—*was made sin for us*,——*sacrificed for us* and the like.

SHOULD it be said that one person became a *surety* for another—that he was bound, imprisoned, made a victim for him; no one would be at any loss to determine the meaning of the expressions. All would immediately conceive that the surety was bound, imprisoned, made a victim, in the room and stead of the offender. This would be the construction which the common sense of mankind would universally put on such like expressions, in the case before us. For one person to become bound for *another*, or subject himself to any evil or penalty *for him*; is, in a strict and proper sense, to *substitute* himself, and, put himself in the *room and place* of the delinquent. By a parity of reason, therefore, and by all just rules of construction, we must suppose that the variety of expressions made use of, in the holy scriptures, relative to the design and reason of the sufferings and death of Christ, do indeed imply that he *substituted himself* in the place of sinners, and *died in their room and stead.*

THAT Christ should *himself* become the price of the sinner's redemption—that he should give *himself*, *his life*, a ransom for sinners—that he should be *made sin*, *suffer*, *die*, *and be sacrificed for them*; are expressions which convey a sense too plain and intelligible to be easily evaded. And, if these and such like expressions, do not imply that, for some reason or other, Christ verily *substituted himself*, *and subjected himself to suffering and death*, *in the room and place of sinners*; it will be difficult to find language, to invent

terms, which would fully and unequivocally ascertain *this idea* of the end of his death.

IT being then admitted that Christ did really die in the *room and stead* of sinners; the following remarks naturally offer themselves, viz.

1. THAT, the death and sacrifice of Christ had an especial and peculiar relation to the *penal part* of the law of God. It is acknowledged that a humble spirit, and a broken heart, are frequently termed *sacrifices*, in the holy scriptures. And one principal reason of it, probably, is the correspondent views which were contained in such exercises, with the plain language, the natural import, of the sacrifices of atonement which were made for sin, under the law. The *broken spirit* which David considers as the acceptable sacrifice to God,(*m*) implied an acknowledgement of the righteousness of the divine law, and a hope and trust in the mercy of God through an atonement. And, as this was but the obvious implication of the levitical sacrifices, the term itself, by a very easy and natural transition, might be carried to the *temper of mind* with which the literal sarifices were to be made. But, literal sacrifices themselves are necessary only for sinners: they are instituted only in case of *guilt*, and where the law is broken. Had there been no sin, no sacrifice would have been required. The sacrifices under the law, in all cases wherein they were to be used, supposed that offences had been committed: And, only in cases of *offence* were sacrifices of atonement appointed. Where sin had not been committed, there was no need of, either confession of guilt in the creature, or testimony of displeasure in the Creator: But, where it had, both were necessary in order to reconciliation. And, both these, we are to remember,

(*m*) Psalms li. 17.

were implied in the bloody sacrifices of the law; and equally so in the sacrifice of Christ.

THE law of God, in the penal part of it, hath no demands on the *righteous:* but sin brings us under obligation to punishment. The *preceptive part* of the law immediately and continually respects every creature; lying equally on every one, with all its binding force. But, not so as to the *penal:* this immediately respects only the transgressor; having a relation to him, and a demand on him, which it hath not on the innocent. And, as sacrifices of atonement are necessary only in cases of transgression, it is hence evident that they have a more immediate reference to the penalties, than to the preceptive parts of the divine law. As far, therefore, as there is a similitude, and unity of design, between the bloody sacrifices of the law, and the sacrifice of Christ; so far the latter, as well as the former had a more immediate reference to the sanctions of the law. As far as the latter was prefigured by the former; so far the penal, rather than the preceptive parts of the law were regarded in it.

2. IT appears from the preceding observations, that Christ was a *sacrifice* in his *bloody and ignominious death*, in a different sense from what he was in his *holy and obedient life*. However necessary it was that Christ should live a perfectly pure and holy life, in order to the acceptableness of the sacrifice which he made of himself in his death; (as this indeed was absolutely necessary) still, his *death* was a sacrifice in a different sense from that of his *obedient life*. Sin-offerings, under the former dispensation, were to be made only of clean beasts; and those, too, such as were without blemish. Yet, these beasts, clean and unblemished, were to be offered up in sacrifice to God. So Christ, "through the eternal Spirit, *offered up him-*

" *self without spot* to God."(*n*) Therefore, his people are said to be redeemed from their vain conversation *with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.*(*o*) And, as the redemption which Christ hath obtained for his people is ascribed to his *blood*, or his *death*, as its procuring cause; we are naturally led to consider the sacrifice he made of himself as consisting in a peculiar and distinguishing manner in his *death*.

AGREEABLY to this view of the matter, Christ who knew no sin, is said to have been *made sin* for us;(*p*) which can be true in no other sense than being made a *sin-offering*. And that it was not in his obedient life, but his ignominious death that Christ was made a sin-offering, seems naturally to be suggested by the distinction which the Apostle makes between his first and second appearing. He says, " As it is appoint-" ed unto man once to die—so Christ was once offered " to bear the sins of many: And unto them that look " for him shall he appear the second time *without sin* " unto salvation."(*q*)

WE know not in what respects Christ will appear the second time, without sin, any more than he did the first, excepting it be that at his second coming he will not make his *soul* or his *life* an *offering for sin*. And it is exceedingly plain that *sufferings* and *death* have a more direct and immediate relation to the sanctions of the law, than *obedience*.

3. IT may be remarked further that the same character, the same disposition of the Deity, which would have appeared in the death of the sinner, was designed to be exhibited in *the death of Christ*. It has been

(*n*) Hebrews ix. 14. (*o*) 1 Peter i. 19. (*p*) 2 Corinthians v. 21. (*q*) Hebrews ix. 27, 28.

before observed that it is essential to the glory of God, that the spirit of the law be perfectly adhered to, and fully maintained, in his administration of government. Hence, and hence only, arose the necessity of the *sinner's* death. Had not the former been necessary, neither would the latter. Had it not been necessary that the same character should appear, and be fully and perfectly preserved, in *governing*, as was naturally exhibited by the laws which were originally established as the *rules* of divine government: we could discern no necessity of even the *sinner's* death. But seeing there is an obvious necessity of this, we easily see why it must be that the soul, that sins should, also, die. If, therefore, the *Saviour* died in the *room and stead* of the sinner, we cannot rationally suppose otherwise than that, in this remarkable event, the same divine disposition was delineated, and the same character exhibited, which would have appeared in the death of the sinner. Consequently,

4. The principal design of the *death of Christ* was not to discover the perfection and strength of his own personal obedience; and to bestow on it a lustre, with which it could not otherwise have shone. It is confessed that this is an end not only worthy of being an object, but which also was very advantageously answered by the death of Christ. Still it is evident that this was not the only, or even principal object in view, in this great event. For Christ to *die* in order to discover the immoveable strength of his disposition to *obey* God: and to *die in the room and stead* of those who must otherwise have fallen victims to divine wrath; are not precisely one and the same thing: Nor do they exhibit the character of the great Governor of the world exactly in the same point of light. The death of the sinner is a glass in which we see the righteousness, the punitive justice of God: So, also, is the death of Christ. In the former, we have a

view of righteousness as it relates to the execution of punishment: So, also, in the latter; if it be true that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners; and, that his death had a more direct and immediate relation to the *sanction* of the moral law.

THE death of Christ discovered his own *righteousness*, not merely as it relates to protecting the innocent; but, also, to punishing the guilty: not only as it respects rewarding the virtuous; but, bringing evil on the wicked. Otherwise we cannot see how it could be said with propriety, that he was *made sin*, or a *sin-offering*, for us. *Righteousness* is a general term, which relates to law and government. It equally regards the sanctions, as the precepts of the law; and, as really respects the execution of punishments, as the bestowment of rewards. Christ's becoming a curse for us, and his dying in our room and stead, as truly imply that he *suffered* for us, as any thing said in the holy scriptures supposeth that he *obeyed* the law for us. And, when he is called *the Lord our righteousness*, the term is to be taken in a large and general sense, as relating, both to the precepts and the sanctions, of the divine law: And, is to be considered as regarding *government* as it is supported, both by the execution of punishments, and the bestowment of rewards. So, also, when the righteousness of the law is spoken of as being fulfilled in christians,(*r*) the term is to be taken in a general sense; and, is to be considered as having respect to *law in general*, as well the penal, as the preceptive parts of it: Otherwise we could not see how the honor and dignity of the divine government could be preserved, and yet the guilty go unpunished.

(*r*) Romans viii. 4.

CHAP. V.

Shewing the necessity of Christ's perfect obedience in order to his making atonement for sin; and, the influence which his personal righteousness hath in procuring pardon for the sinner.

NOTWITHSTANDING the evidence there is that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners; and that the crimes of men are expiated by the sufferings of Christ; it is to be remembered that there is no merit, no moral worth or atoning virtue, *merely in sufferings.* Pain and distress have no moral virtue in them; and are of no importance, otherwise than as *means* through which the beauty of the divine character, and the true disposition of the divine mind, may be seen by his creatures. For, as all the divine administration is fitted to exhibit the character of God, if punishments did not answer this end, they would never be made use of in the divine government. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the *sufferings of the sinner*, in no other way than as they serve to exhibit the righteous character of God, and prove him to be a hater of iniquity. Were not this the case, the moral character of the man Jesus Christ would not have been of so great importance to his being made an offering for sin: But, his whole worth as *a sacrifice* must be estimated by his capacity to endure pain.

THE worth of the sacrifice which Christ made of himself for the sins of the world, arises from the moral excellencies of his person and character. Were not this the case, the same quantity of sufferings endured by a person of inferior character, would have equally answered the end of obtaining pardon for the sinner. It is true, indeed, that for a person of *Christ's* dignity and worth to endure *greater degrees* of pain, is of

more importance than enduring *less:* yet, the value, the import, in a moral view, of his sufferings, be they either greater or less, arises from his personal worth and character.

This being the case, it was absolutely necessary, in order to the atonement he was about to make by once offering up himself to God, that his life and character should be most perfectly pure and spotless: Otherwise, in his death he could not have been an offering of a sweet savor to God. This, we are naturally led to suppose, was a reason why the sin-offerings that were made under the former dipensation, were expressly required to be of the clean beasts; and no other would be accepted. For God expressly declares, "cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, "and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt "thing."(*s*) God's acceptance of an offering, and his being reconciled to the offender, were upon the express condition that the sacrifice was made only of beasts that were clean. And the design of this law was, not only to teach the duty and obligation of devoting our best services, and giving up the best we have to God; but more clearly and perfectly to prefigure that glorious sacrifice which Christ made of *himself* to God for the sins of the world. Hence the Apostle saith, "For such an high priest became us, "who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from "sinners, and made higher than the heavens."(*t*) The dignity and excellency of the character of Christ, and these only, put the infinite value on the sacrifice which he made of himself for the sins of the world. And on this account, and this alone, it was that God was pleased to smell a sweet savor in the offering. Had there been the least blemish or imperfection in the character of Christ, his blood would be as far from

(*s*) Malachi i. 14. (*t*) Hebrews vii. 26.

cleansing from sin, as that of bulls and goats: And his sufferings, however great in kind, or degree, would have been of no avail to obtain pardon for the smallest transgression.

An angry tyrant may have his rage appeased by suffering—his revenge glutted by blood. But not so with the infinitely pure and glorius governor of the world, who hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. An exhibition of the glories of his character, the infinite strength and purity of his love, is the great end in view, in all the pain and misery he brings on his creatures. The *sufferings* of Christ, therefore, aside from the moral excellencies of his character, his most perfect and virtuous obedience under them, could not have been of the least worth in the sight of God: Because neither the wisdom, nor righteousness of God in his regards to the general good, could have been seen in the Father's laying on him the iniquities of us all.

But the necessity of the *obedience* of Christ, in order to his making atonement for sin, is further evident from such considerations as these, viz.

1. The perfect obedience of Christ was a necessary and glorious attestation to the righteousness and equity of the moral law.

Mercy to the sinner necessarily implies that the law by which he is condemned is just and righteous. And without a full and perfect acknowledgment of this, Christ could neither consistently intercede for mercy to transgressors, nor the Father bestow it. Until this point was fully acknowledged and established, there could be no room for reconciliation: because every exercise of mercy without this, would be an implicit confession of undue severity in the

law. Therefore Christ himself saith, that "heaven "and earth shall pass, before one jot, or one tittle "shall pass from the law, until all shall be fulfilled."(*u*) But to behold a person of such high dignity as the Lord Jesus Christ, and of so transcendently excellent a character, perfectly obeying the divine law; and exhibiting in himself, and that under the most trying scenes, a most perfect pattern of that cheerful obedience and unreserved submission which is required of men; affords a strong testimony to the righteousness of that law under which men were originally placed: And is fitted to convince us that every breach of it deserves the curse. No pattern, no example, could possibly carry stronger evidence of this than the holy and obedient life of Christ.

SUCH a testimony to the righteousness of the law, was but a proper and necessary acknowledgment to be made to God, by him who undertook to mediate peace between God and men. Without this it could not have appeared that Christ *in every thing* justified God, and *wholly* condemned the sinner. And, had not the man Jesus Christ most perfectly justified God and condemned the sinner, his offering up himself upon the cross, instead of being a sweet incense, would only have been falling a victim to the just indignation of his injured sovereign.

BUT, when Christ, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death; when his death was an expression of the high sense he entertained of the excellency and righteousness of the moral law; the sacrifice he made of himself was then an offering of a sweet savor unto God; and, naturally prepared the way for a treaty of peace and reconciliation between God and men. And, the

(*u*) Matt. v. 18.

perfect obedience of Christ under all the sufferings he endured on earth, especially in the last and extreme scenes of his life, was peculiarly honorable and acceptable to God, as it carried the fullest acknowledgment of the righteousness of divine government when administered in the actual execution of divine vengeance on his enemies.

When we take a view of the nature, design and greatness of the sufferings of Christ, it will appear that his voluntarily subjecting himself to them, and his ready, cheerful and patient obedience under them, were what really constituted the whole moral worth of the sacrifice which he made of himself for the sins of the world. The *bare distress and pain* of the Saviour, in themselves simply considered, had no virtue in them, and were of no worth. But, the disposition of mind with which he endured those extreme agonies and pains, the temper he expressed under them, were of infinite worth. These were, therefore, precious in the sight of God, and worthy to be acknowledged by Christ's being raised to that high station of honor and glory to which he is now exalted. Therefore, Christ's present exaltation and reign are spoken of by the Apostle, as the reward of his voluntary humiliation and obedience unto death. Treating on this subject he says of Christ, "being "found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the "cross. *Wherefore* God hath highly exalted him, "and given him a name which is above every name; "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, "of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things "under the earth; and that every tongue should con-"fess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God "the Father."(w) Christ's real merit of the high

(w) Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11.

station he now possesseth, consisted, not in the extremity of his sufferings, but the perfection of his obedience. It is not, strictly speaking, for the pains he endured, but for the views and temper of mind he manifested under them, that the man Jesus Christ is raised to universal dominion, and has angels, men and devils subject to his authority.

2. THAT God should be manifest in flesh, and voluntarily lay down his life for his people, and become a curse for them, not only strongly attests the righteousness of the divine law as a rule of government; but abundantly proves that the disposition of the divine mind most invariably conforms to the *rules* of equity and righteousness. That this should be done, was a matter of infinite importance to the honorable exercise of mercy. It is far from being enough that the *rules* of divine government should be such as approve themselves to the consciences of men, and carry conviction of their equity: But, seeing that God will forever maintain the dignity and honor of his own character; when he was about to do so wonderful a thing as to pardon and save sinners, it was a matter of the last importance that he should exhibit a character, a disposition of mind, perfectly conformable to the true spirit of those rules of government which he had previously established. Otherwise, though the *law* might appear just, *God himself* could not appear so in justifying the ungodly.

BUT, the scene of the sufferings of the Son of God abundantly displayed *this character* of Jehovah, *this disposition* of the divine mind; which it could not have done in such a manner as to lay a foundation for mercy to sinners, had not the character, the obedience of the Mediator, been absolutely spotless and perfect.

However voluntary Christ was in *laying down his life*, the hand and agency of the Father are nevertheless, by no means to be overlooked in this remarkable event. Though the *Son made his soul an offering for sin*, the *Father* bruised him, put him to grief, and laid on him the iniquity of us all;(x) the hand and the agency of God were as truly conspicuous, and his providence as active, in bringing suffering, distress and death on the Son of his love; as in any evil he doth, or ever will, bring on sinners. Christ suffered as much by the decree, the determinate counsel of God, as impenitent sinners will do hereafter. And in this active providence, in that astonishing event, God acted for his own glory, and designedly exhibited his own infinitely excellent character, as really as in the final perdition of impenitent sinners. Yea, and he evidently designed that the same righteous regard to his holy law, to good order and government, should appear and shine in the former event as in the latter.

The case being thus, it is easy to see that, unless the moral character of Christ had been absolutely perfect, *that exhibition* of divine righteousness, which was made in his sufferings and death, could afford no more reason for mercy to sinners, than *that* which is made in the destruction of sinners themselves. For a manifestation of righteousness in bringing evil upon one whose moral character is not perfect, is so far from exhibiting a reason why the wicked should go unpunished, that it rather inforceth the necessity of their punishment. Therefore, that the sufferings of Christ might be such a manifestation of divine righteousness as would open the way for God to appear just in justifying the ungodly, it was of absolute importance that he himself should be without sin, and that guile should not be found in his mouth. Then

(x) Isaiah liii. 6, 10.

his taking the curse upon himself, and the Father's laying it on him, will be so bright a display of divine righteousness, as to render God's regard to law, to good order and government, gloriously conspicuous in the exercise of mercy to such as penitently fly for refuge to the Saviour of the world.

If it be admitted that God's regard particularly to the penal part of his law was designedly manifested in the sufferings and death of Christ; it is easy to see that this regard to the law would become conspicuous in proportion to the dignity and excellency of him who suffered. For, as on the one hand, we estimate the benevolence that is expressed in the bestowment of good, partly by the meanness and unworthiness of the subject on whom it is conferred; so, on the other, the degree of displeasure which is expressed in bringing evil, is estimated greatly by the dignity and excellency of the person on whom it falls. The same measure of natural evil, the same quantity of pain is expressive of very different degrees of displeasure, according to the difference of character and dignity in the person on whom it is inflicted. For a King to imprison his *Son* for a crime, awes his subjects more than the execution of a common felon, and may do more to establish his authority, and gain respect to his government. The reason is, that his regards to the rights of his government are more strongly painted in the former case than in the latter. So for God to inflict pain upon a mere man, would naturally express displeasure to spectators: But if the same degree of natural evil brought on *him who is his fellow*, his anger would glow in brighter and more awful colors, and strike the spectators with a reverence and fear which the other instance could not beget.

Therefore, the absolute perfection, as well as dignity of the moral character of Christ, when he was

about to offer up his life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world; were of the utmost importance to the acceptableness of his offering, and the manifestation it was necessary should be made of God's righteous displeasure against those for whom he died. For without this absolute perfection, and high dignity, of the character of the Saviour, his death on the cross would not have been a glass in which the divine purity could have been discovered with sufficient clearness, while he exercised mercy toward sinners.

3. The perfect obedience of Christ, and that even unto death, and the spotless purity of his moral character, were absolutely necessary to prepare him for *interceding* with the Father for sinners.

The dignity and excellency of the intercessor's character, add weight, and give importance to his intercession. It is more honorable to a prince to pardon, upon the intercession of some illustrious person, than on that of one of his menial servants. And when the penalty for the remission of which intercession is made, is perfectly deserved; and the honor of the sovereign is concerned in testifying against it; it is necessary that the intercession itself should carry in it the fullest acknowledgments, both of the righteousness of the judge, and the justice of the punishment. For without this the intercession itself might justly be interpreted as a reflection on the Sovereign, and a vindication of the criminal. This being the case the intercessor naturally, in some sense, puts on the character and takes the place of him who is condemned.

But when we consider the glorious and infinite majesty of God, on one hand; and the extreme guilt and inexpressible vileness of the sinner, on the other; we cannot but see the absolute importance of the fullest acknowledgments, both of God's righteousness, and the sinner's guilt, in him who steps in as a mediator

between them; however dignified he be in his own personal character. None but a person of the most exalted character would be equal to the weight of such a mediation. And one who suitably estimated the infinitely different characters, qualities and stations of the beings, between whom he was to mediate a peace, would never presume to appear before the great God without the fullest testimonials of a high and perfect sense of the divine righteousness on one hand, and the extreme guilt and wickedness of the sinner on the other. But how could these testimonials be so well obtained, and where could such views in the Saviour, both of God's righteousness, and the sinner's guilt, be so strongly painted, as in his obedience unto death, and that even the death of the cross? in this view of the matter, nothing like the death of Christ, could pave the way for him to the Father: And nothing like *his own blood* could give weight to his intercession.

For so illustrious a person as the infinite Redeemer, to exemplify his regards to the honor of God and his law, by a most perfect obedience under the most unparalleled sufferings, even unto death, and his sense of the sinner's ill desert, by appearing before the eternal God *in his own blood;* must wonderfully qualify him for so important a mediation; and above every thing, give weight to his intercession. It is no wonder that God does not reject an intercession which does such honor to his law and government, and makes his character appear so glorious in the exercises of mercy to sinners.

Thus we see how a person of Christ's most excellent character prepared himself for acting the part of an intercessor for sinners; and the trying scenes he voluntarily went through, to qualify himself for so weighty and important an office. And all this was

necessary to render himself acceptable in the eyes of the Father, in character of mediator; and to gain an audiance in a cause of such a nature as that which he had undertaken.

CHAP. VI.

Shewing the ends which are answered by the SUFFERINGS *of Christ; and what is the language and import of them.*

AS none of the providences of God are without their instruction; evils and calamities have a language, an import, as well as other dispensations. And if there be a language in the sufferings which are brought on moral beings, greater degrees of distress and pain are more significant than smaller ones; and expressive of higher emotions in him who inflicts them. Although, therefore, it be admitted that the end and import of the sufferings of Christ cannot be collected merely from their *greatness: this*, however, is a consideration which may not be without its use, in investigating a subject of so much importance. Greatness of sufferings gives a coloring to things, which is not found in smaller degrees of distress: and naturally raises and heightens the ideas, both with respect to the avenger and the patient.

WERE the sufferings of Christ no more, nor greater, than would naturally and necessarily affect human, animal nature, in that trying situation in which he was placed, and in which he expired; they would still have a language, an import in them. But were there superadded to these, *peculiar* agonies and distresses, this most surprising event immediately puts on a different hue, and the language of it is written in deeper colors.

In order to a clearer understanding of the design and import of the sufferings of Christ, it may be of use to attend particularly to the descriptions given of them, by the sacred writers; and the manner in which they are represented; that we may, from thence, be enabled to form some estimate of their weight and greatness.

The whole life of Christ, especially his public ministry, was a scene of labor and suffering: But at the close of it his sufferings became much more severe and intense. Accordingly, in regard of *sufferings*, this is spoken of with an emphasis, both by Christ and his Apostles. Thus when the Jews laid violent hands on the Saviour, he says, "When I was daily "with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands "*against me: but this is your hour, and the power of* "*darkness;*"(y) hereby intimating that now he was in a peculiar manner given up into the hands of the powers of darkness. For this reason it manifestly was that the prospect of what he had to endure when he was to make his soul an offering for sin, was so extremely trying and affecting to him. This last trying and affecting scene appeared to lie with great and peculiar weight on the Saviour's mind: And he ever spoke of it with peculiar feelings and emotion. When he told his disciples that he came to set fire on the earth, he immediately adds, "but I have a baptism "to be baptised with, *and how am I straitened till it* "*be accomplished.*"(z) Accordingly, when he went into the garden where he was taken by his enemies, though just before he possessed the utmost composure, he was immediately seized with horror, and said to his disciples, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful *even* "*unto death:*" And this sorrow broke forth into this earnest, pathetic cry, "O my Father, if it be possible,

(y) Luke xxii. 53. (z) Luke xii. 50.

" let this cup pass from me." But that it might not be thought that his spirit failed him, and that his soul shrunk back from the sufferings it was necessary he should endure, he immediately adds, " the *spirit* in- " deed is willing, but the *flesh* is weak."(*a*) This scene is prophetically described, by the Psalmist, in the following manner, " The sorrows of death com- " passed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me : " I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon " the name of the Lord ; O Lord, I beseech thee, " deliver my soul."(*b*) One Evangelist relates that, upon his coming into the garden, " he began to be " sore amazed, and to be very heavy."(*c*) And, another, that upon his earnest cry for deliverance if it might be the will of God, an Angel was sent to him from heaven, to support and strengthen him under his distresses : And, that he was in agony in his prayer, and *his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*(*d*) Soon upon this, his enemies came upon him, being conducted to the place of his retirement by one of his professed friends, and took him by violence, and carried him before the rulers where he suffered the grossest indignity and abuse. Here he was treated with the utmost derision and contempt ; mocked, spit upon, and cruelly smitten. Finally, after sentence of death had been passed upon him, he was led out of the city, and like the vilest malefactors nailed to the cross. There after he had hung a number of hours on the accursed tree, and endured the sore revilings and cruel taunts of his enemies ; as if given up of God himself, in whom he had ever trusted, he pathetically cries out, " My God, " my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?"(*e*) Upon this, nature itself sinking under so dreadful a weight, the mighty Redeemer bowed his sorrowful head, and

(*a*) Matt. xxvi. 38, 39, 41. (*b*) Psalm cxvi. 3, 4. (*c*) Mark xiv. 33. (*d*) Luke xxii. 43, 44. (*e*) Matt. xxvii. 46.

gave up the ghost. The affecting description given us by the Psalmist, of these unparalleled sufferings, may assist us in judging of their nature, and estimating their greatness. After this manner they are prophetically described: "My God, my God, why hast *thou* "forsaken me? why art *thou* so far from helping me, "and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I "cry in the day time, *but thou hearest not;* and in the "night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O "thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers "trusted in thee, *they* trusted, and thou didst deliver "*them. They* cried unto thee, and *were delivered:* "*they* trusted in thee, and *were not confounded.* But "*I* am a worm, and no man; *a reproach of men and* "*despised of the people.* All they that see *me, laugh me* "*to scorn:* they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, "saying, he trusted on the Lord that he would deliver "him: *let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in* "*him*——I am poured out like water, and all my "bones are out of joint: *My heart is like wax, it is* "*melted in the midst of my bowels.* My strength is "dried up like a potsherd: my tongue cleaveth to "my jaws; and thou has brought me into the dust of "death."(*f*)

On this description of the sufferings of Christ, we remark:

1. That it naturally represents his misery as being exceedingly great. Language can hardly paint a scene more full of horror and distress; or represent more keen and pungent anguish. No account is given us, in any part of the sacred writings, of sufferings to be compared with those of the Lord of glory. Admitting the description to be just, and without a figure; we must necessarily suppose that pain and sorrow

(*f*) Psalms xxii. 1—15.

arose to such a height, in the man Jesus Christ, as is beyond the power of a mere human mind to receive.

2. The above description evidently represents the sufferings of Christ as being *peculiarly* great, and attended with some *singular* circumstances which gave an edge to his sorrow. The amazement which took hold on him before the arrival of his enemies, the agony into which he fell while in the garden, and his repeated and fervent importunities that the cup he was about to drink might *if possible*, pass from him; are, all indications of evils in prospect, far greater than those of a mere separation of soul and body. But just before, he appeared with great calmness and composure, instituting the sacrament of the supper, and communing with his disciples in it. But, in a few moments, without any visible cause from any difference of external circumstances, he discovers great perturbation of spirit; and, was in such agony of mind as was too much for nature to bear. This must, certainly, have arisen from some invinsible cause; nor can it be accounted for any otherwise than by supposing that it arose from the immediate hand of God. These circumstances would naturally suggest to the disciples, that there was something far more trying to the mighty Saviour, in that scene of sufferings that was before him, than either the mere indignity he suffered from men, or the pangs of natural death. The pains of death were, soon after, suffered by his disciples, without any such complaint: And, the prospect of suffering death for the sake of Christ, and in his cause, was so far from being terrifying and distressing that it was rather joyful and comforting to them. Accordingly, when the Lord sent *Ananias* to Saul, afterwards called Paul, to perform a miraculous cure upon him; he tells him, that this Saul was a chosen vessel unto the Lord, to bear his name among the gentiles; and says, "I will shew him how great things

" he must *suffer* for my name's sake."(*g*) The strong crying and tears, therefore of the Saviour, and the mighty agonies into which he fell before his death; together with his most affecting exclamation on the cross, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken " me!" when compared with the patience, serenity and fortitude with which his disciples afterward suffered death for his sake; must strongly indicate distress and pains peculiar to *Him who made his soul an offering for sin.* Be the occasion, or especial reason of these sufferings what it may, it is nevertheless manifest that there was something very peculiar in the sufferings themselves; and that they had an unparalleled sharpness in them. What can be more dishonorable to the character and dignity of Christ, especially as he is held forth as the most perfect pattern of meekness, and patience under sufferings; than to suppose his distress and anguish did not rise to an height far exceeding any thing that was ever endured by a mere man? We have no other way to reconcile his bitter cries and complaints, with that patience, that quiet resignation for which he is so much celebrated in the word of God; than by magnifying his sufferings, and heightening our ideas of their weight and greatness.

3. It is, therefore natural to suppose that the principal pains endured by the Lord of glory, in that hour of darkness, were seated particularly *in his mind*—that *the views of mind* which then possessed him, were far more distressing than the pains of mere animal, sensitive nature. If that forsaking him of God which occasioned his bitter exclamation on the cross, was merely his being given up into the power of wicked men, to be put to death; we can still see nothing more dreadful in it, than merely his suffering the pains of

(*g*) Acts ix. 16.

dying. We have, therefore, reason to suppose that such *views* of things, such a *sense* of the awful and terrible nature of divine wrath, then crouded in upon him, and filled his pure and holy mind, as quite overwhelmed him with sorrow; and, were far more insupportable than the pangs of natural death. Thus, might he be said eminently to be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. All the concomitant circumstances of his death, especially when compared with the behavior of his followers under the sufferings they endured for his sake, very naturally concur to suggest these apprehensions concerning the sufferings of Christ.

HAVING thus taken a view of the *sufferings themselves* which our Lord underwent: in order to understand *the language and import* of them, we may, in the first place, consider the hand and agency of God in them; and then, the evidence we have of their being expressions of divine anger.

I. WE may consider the hand and agency of God, in the sufferings of Christ. Though Christ was *God* as well as *man*, and it was indeed GOD that was manifest in flesh; yet so long as he was in the world he acted in a subordinate capacity, put on the form of a servant, and subjected himself to the will and government of his Father who was in heaven. Christ in his whole person, however dignified by being peculiarly and eminently the Son of God, was a servant and became obedient. And every event and circumstance of his life are to be attributed to the providential government and disposal of him who is only God, as their cause, as truly and in as high a sense as the events and circumstances of the lives of mere men.

ON this ground we observe,

1. THAT GOD brought on the man Jesus Christ, all the evils and sufferings which he endured. *His* hand and agency were not less visible, nor his power and providence less active, in bringing sufferings and death on his *only begotten Son*, than on sinners of mankind. Nor indeed was the governing providence of God less concurrent and active, in bringing pain and distress on the man Jesus Christ, than it is in bringing evils on impenitent sinners, either in this world or the world to come. The flame which consumed the life of the Saviour, was as truly lighted up by the power of God; as that which will torment his enemies, day and night, forever and ever. This is manifest, as well from the language in which this event is spoken of in the word of God; as from the nature and reason of things. Thus it is said, JEHOVAH *laid on him the iniquities of us all:* And *it pleased* JEHOVAH *to bruise him and put him to grief.*(*h*) God also saith, by the prophet, relative to this event, "Awake, O "sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man "that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: *smite* "the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."(*i*) Therefore the Apostle Peter acknowledgeth the death of Christ to be the effect of *the hand and determinate counsel of God:* And that though men crucified him with *wicked hands*, they nevertheless did no more than what *the hand and counsel of God, determined to be done.*(*k*)

IT would be very inconsistent, both with reason, and the plain and natural import of these scripture-expressions, to suppose that he who is only God, the original and supreme Governor of the world, suspended even in the least degree, that agency which had hitherto been unremitted and universal; stept aside, and stood as a mere spectator of this horrid scene. If this

(*h*) Isai. liii. 6, 10. (*i*) Zachari. xiii. 7. (*k*) Acts iv. 28.

were the case, how it could before, with propriety, be predicted that *God should smite, and bruise, and put him to grief;* and afterward be acknowledged that his sufferings and death were the effects of *the hand and determinate counsel of God;* is not easy to be comprehended. Were it so that the hand and power of God were less active in bringing those evils on Christ, than in any other evils brought on moral beings; it is not easy to see why Christ, who, in character of mediator, always considered himself as a servant, and acknowledged subjection to God, should yet cry to Him for help and deliverance. It is evident, therefore, that whatever evils were endured by Christ, were from the hand of *that God* between whom and men he acted as mediator: All the sufferings he endured, were from *his* active power and providence; they were as much from the hand of God, as any evils that were ever brought on any of the human race.

2. ALL the conduct of God, in his providential government over his creatures, is expressive, and hath a language in it. None of the *providences* of God are without meaning; but are all instructive and significant. They exhibit the same uniform and glorious character that is held up in his word. The same purposes and designs, the same most perfect and excellent disposition, which are expressed *in words*, in the holy scriptures, are delineated and exemplified *in facts*, in his providential government. The divine character is described in *words*, in the sacred oracles; and exhibited in *facts* in his *providence and works*. And the character itself is not less legible, nor its excellencies less visible or conspicuous, in the latter than in the former. The real character, the general disposition of the divine mind, is not less obvious in what he *does*, than in what he *says:* Nor could it easily be accounted for that it should be otherwise, while one great end of his *word* is, to explain the reasons of his

conduct—the rule of his providential government. And as the glory of God really appears in the perfect correspondence of his actual government, with those laws of his kingdom which are taught us in his word; so, every part of the divine conduct toward intelligent creatures, expresseth the same general character which is marked out in the promises and threatenings of revelation.

3. THIS being the case, it is manifest that there is no part of the divine conduct toward moral creatures, but what is expressive, either of his *approbation of righteousness*, or *hatred of iniquity*. It is the glory of God that he loves righteousness, and hates iniquity. This is absolutely essential to his goodness and love. Without this, his disposition to promote the general and the greatest good, could not possibly be perfect. And if such a disposition as this wholly possesses and fills the divine mind, there can be no part of the divine conduct but what is expressive of it. It must be that, in all the good, and the evil, which he brings on the subjects of his moral government, he invariably exhibits this most pure and perfect goodness: adjusting all his providential dispensations in such a manner, and in such perfect wisdom, as naturally to carry the marks of it; and sensibly to express, to rational beings, either his approbation of virtue, or his hatred of vice.

THIS brings us to show, in the next place,

II. THAT the sufferings and death of Christ were expressions of divine anger.

THERE is nothing in the word of God to lead us to suppose that evils brought on moral beings are not, in every instance, expressive of divine anger; but a variety of things that evidently prove the contrary. For,

1. THE law and the promise of God, secure the innocent from every positive evil, every infelicity which doth not necessarily result from the mere natural imperfection of the creature. The word of God is full of promises to the righteous; and there is no mention any where made of evil, but in case of transgression. God *blessed* our first parents in their estate of innocency; and gave not the least intimation of any evil that should befall them, unless they rebelled against him. Such was the nature of the covenant, the tenour of the law, under which they were placed, that it absolutely secured them from every positive evil; and particularly from so great an evil as *natural death*, in case they persisted in their obedience. Therefore the Apostle considers temporal death as a certain proof that the subject of it is a sinner. He says, "Where-"fore as by one man *sin* entered into the world, and "*death by sin;* and so death hath passed upon all "men, *for that all have sinned.*"(*l*) As *sin* brought death into the world, so *this* still gives it universal dominion. As it was originally a testimony of divine anger, it still continues to be so. That death is a curse is evident from this, if nothing else, that the *death of Christ* is brought, by the inspired Apostle, as a proof that *he became a curse.*(*m*)

BUT it is evident that the law of God secures the innocent, not only from *death*, but from *every other* positive evil. The Apostle saith, "Now to him that "worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of "debt."(*n*) Where the obedience is perfect, the reward is due by law; the law, under which man was originally placed, secures it; and it is not considered as an act of *grace* to confer it. And if the reward here spoken of implies a deliverence from all positive evils, and a security against them; if it intends a hap-

(*l*) Rom. v. 12. (*m*) See Galat. iii. 13. (*n*) Rom. iv. 4.

piness as complete as the *natural imperfection* of the creature will admit; then, of course, the law, the established rule of divine government, certainly secures the innocent from every such evil; and ascertains to him all possible good. But if the divine law thus protects the innocent, and secures him against evil, then all positive evils brought on moral beings, must certainly proclaim divine anger, and prove that some iniquity hath taken place.

If the law of God doth not certainly secure the innocent from all evils; if there are evils to which such may be exposed and subjected, which nevertheless, are not the objects of a *curse*, and *that* too the curse of God's law; there is no security that they who are *redeemed by Christ* shall ever be delivered from all evil; because *his redemption* is effectual to deliver only from the curse of the law. Christ hath redeemed his people from *the curse of the law*; but from no other evils than such as they are doomed to *by this curse*. If, therefore, the *law* doth not secure the *innocent* from evil and sufferings, neither doth the *gospel*, the *believer*. And of course, if natural evils and sufferings are not invariable testimonies of divine displeasure; we neither should have had any security against them, *had we remained innocent*; nor can we now obtain any security against them *by being interested in the redemption purchased by Christ*. Yet we find it expressly declared, concerning those who are redeemed by Christ, that "God shall wipe away all "tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more "*death*, neither *sorrow*, nor *crying*, neither shall there "be any more *pain*: for the former things are passed "away."(o) Accordingly,

2. Positive evils, we find, are invariably the sub-

(o) Rev. xxi. 4.

jects of a *threatning:* with these God *threatens* his enemies. There is no evil to which human nature is subjected in the present world, or to which men are exposed in the future, but what is comprised in some one of the *threatnings* of the word of God. Therefore, though peace and happiness are promised to the righteous, the Lord proclaims, "Wo unto the wicked, it "shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands "shall be given him."(*p*) And, it is of great importance that we view the subject in this light, in order that we may be convinced, that the evils we suffer in this life, are indeed so many testimonies of God's righteous displeasure against us. God never *threatens* evils excepting in the cases of offence; and, never *brings* evils in the execution of the great and original laws of his kingdom but on those who transgress. And, if this be true, it manifestly proves that all *positive evils* are *certain expressions* of divine anger. But,

3. THE holy Scriptures clearly and very evidently teach us that the sufferings and death of Christ were expressions of divine anger. By the Prophet Zachariah, God calls upon his sword to awake against Christ, and commissions it to take away his life in the following words, "Awake, O sword, against my shep-"herd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith "the Lord of hosts: *smite* the shepherd and the "sheep shall be scattered—."(*q*) That Christ is the shepherd here spoken of, is evident from this, that he was many times prophesied of under that title; and frequently stiled himself *the shepherd*, the *true shepherd*, while he was upon earth; and had that title often given him, by the Apostles, after his ascension. And, that the words under consideration had reference to the death of Christ, and were an express prediction of it, is manifest from the application which he, him-

(*p*) Isai. iii. 11. (*q*) Zachar. xiii. 7.

self, makes of them, on the night on which he was betrayed. When Christ went out to the mount of Olives, after the institution of the sacramental supper, he says to his disciples "All ye shall be offended "because of me this night: *for it is written*, I will "smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall "be scattered:"(*r*) And this we find no where written but in the passage before us. Here, then, God calls upon his own sword to awake against Christ, and to smite him. And, this is evidently the language, the expression, of righteous indignation. God's *sword* is that by which he executes vengeance: As the *jus gladii* among the Romans, the *sword* of the civil magestrate, means his authority to execute punishments. Therefore the Psalmist saith, "God judgeth "the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked "every day. If he turn not, (that is, if the wicked "turn not,) he (God,) will whet his *sword*; he hath "bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also "prepared for him the instrument of death: he or-"daineth his arrows against the persecutors."(*s*) And the apostle urgeth the fear of the civil magistrate on this consideration that he "beareth not the *sword* "in vain, but is the minister of God, a revenger to "execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."(*t*) Hence it is evident that God's *sword* is used in the execution of vengeance: Nor, is it ever made use of in any other way. *The sword* he made use of, when he smote Christ, was more especially, the cruel and perfidious Jews. Accordingly, we find that David stiles wicked men *God's sword*. Thus he prays, "Arise, O Lord, "disappoint him, cast him down; deliver my soul "from the *wicked* which is *thy sword*."(*u*) And this prayer, we have reason to suppose, David made, in the Spirit, personating Christ, of whom he was an eminent

(*r*) Matt. xxvi. 31. (*s*) Psalm vii. 11, 13.
(*t*) Rom. xiii. 4. (*u*) Psalm xvii. 13.

type. And, the prayer itself is the same, for substance, which Christ, in his own person, made when he cried *if it be possible let this cup pass from me.* Thus God made use of wicked men as his sword against Christ, to smite him and take away his life.

In like manner God had, before made use of the Assyrians as his *rod* to correct and chastise the people of Israel. In such language as this doth the Prophet foretel the evils which God was about to bring upon his people by the hand of the proud Assyrians: "O "Assyrian, the *rod* of mine *anger*, and the staff in "their hand is *mine indignation.* I will send him "against an hypocritical nation; and against the people "of *my wrath* will I give him a charge——to tread "them down like the mire of the streets."(*w*) When, therefore, God makes use of the same instruments, *wicked men*, in bringing evil upon Christ that he had, again and again, made use of in executing his wrath; when they are expressly called his *sword*, which is never drawn but for the execution of vengeance: And, when this *sword* is expressly called up by God himself, and commissioned to smite Christ; the whole rule and analogy of divine dispensation, and every concurring circumstance, lead us to view this astonishing event as an awful manifestation of divine displeasure. All these considerations being taken fully into view, if we cannot read the *holy anger* of God in the death of Jesus Christ, it will be difficult to determine that *this* is written in legible characters, in *any evil* that God has ever yet brought upon men.

But, further, we are expressly told that *Christ was made a curse.* The Apostle says, "Christ hath re-"deemed us from the curse of the law, *being made a* "*curse for us;* for it is written, Cursed is every one

(*w*) Isaiah x. 5, 6.

"that hangeth on a tree."(x) These words plainly suppose that the sufferings of Christ on the tree, were a fruit and manifestation of divine anger. For,

1. THE curse that Christ suffered, or was made, was none other than the curse of God. The words which the Apostle quotes in proof of Christ's being made a curse, are these, *For he that is hanged,* (on a tree) *is accursed of God.* And, if Christ's being crucified, and hanged on a tree, are a proof that he was made a *curse*, they are equally a proof that the curse which he was made, was *the curse of God.* For every one that was hanged on a tree, was accursed of God: Christ's being hung upon a tree was a proof that he was made a curse; and therefore, a proof that, if he was made *any curse*, it was *the curse of God*—if he suffered, or endured *any curse*, he suffered and endured *the curse of God.*

2. WE know of no other curse of God, than what is threatened in his holy law. God inflicts, or executes, no curses but such as are denounced in his law. The holy scriptures, certainly know of no other curse, and treat of no other curses that are ever, either denounced, or executed, by the Deity, than those which are penalties of the law, and with which the breakers of the law are threatened. Therefore,

3. CHRIST'S suffering the curse of God, was his suffering the *curse of the law.* If Christ endured the curse of God, and the holy scriptures know of no other curse of God than the curse of the law; it plainly follows that Christ endured, or was made, the curse of the law. And that it was *the curse of the law* that Christ was made, is manifestly implied in the words under consideration. The Apostle saith that Christ

(x) Galatians iii. 13.

hath redeemed us from the *curse of the law*, being *made a curse* for us. He was then treating of the *curse of the law* and no other: He had just said that as many as are *of the works of the law*, are under the curse. And then asserts, that it is from *the curse of the law* that Christ hath redeemed us. From *this curse* Christ redeems his people by being *made a curse* for them: Which evidently implies that it was *the curse of the law* that Christ was made. There is not here given the least hint of any other curse; nor any thing said to lead the thoughts to any other, or suggest the most distant idea of any other. And as an evidence that Christ, who, it was well known, had been hanged on a tree, was made a curse; the Apostle quotes a passage from the old testament in which it is asserted that he who is hanged on a tree *is accursed of God*, and applies it to Christ. This makes it manifest that *the curse of God*, which is *the curse of the law*, was laid upon *Christ:* And by *his* being made *this curse*, he redeemed his people from the curse of the law. The particle *for*, with which the Apostle introduceth the text from the Mosaic law, plainly shows that the passage is not *exegetical*, nor brought with design to explain the *nature* of the curse which Christ was made; but to *prove* that he was indeed made *a curse*. Or should it be admitted, (which however there is no reason for admitting) that the Apostle designed, in those last words, to let us know what the curse was which Christ endured; still it will be evident that he was made *a curse* in which God manifested his *anger:* And, therefore, that the sufferings and death of Christ were indeed expressions of divine anger. It therefore follows, that the scriptures plainly teach us that the fruits of divine displeasure were endured by Christ, especially when he hung upon the tree.

Some have supposed that to represent Christ as enduring *the curse of the law*, would necessarily involve

in it the idea of *his being a sinner*, and of his feeling those horrors and that despair which are peculiar to sinners. And this supposition is founded on an apprehension that *spiritual death* is a great, if not principal part of the curse of the law. But this is a supposition quite without foundation. *Spiritual death*, as the phrase is commonly used, means a person's being perfectly under the dominion and power of sin; or to express it in scripture-language, *being dead in trespasses and sins:* which is the same as his being *wholly and totally a sinner.* But this surely can with no propriety be considered as a curse upon the sinner. Sin is *voluntary;* it is what is *chosen* by the sinner; and is not the *curse itself*, but that which *exposes to it, and incurs it.* It would be strange that for committing *one sin*, which must be a voluntary act, God should *threaten* the sinner with committing *another*, which must be equally voluntary; and make *this* the penalty of the former—the curse to be endured for it. At this rate, the penalties of the law could not possibly be any terror to the sinner.

THE penalties of the law, therefore, must of necessity, and in the nature of things, be *natural evils*, not *moral.* By bringing *natural evil* it is, that God expresseth his displeasure against *moral.* *Natural evils* are punishments, but *moral* are not: The *former*, therefore, and only the former, are the sanctions, or curses of the law. So that Christ's enduring the curse of the law, would by no means imply that he was a sinner; that God was angry with Christ; or that Christ felt those sensations of despair, and those horrors of an accusing conscience, which will necessarily accompany, and be a bitter part of the sufferings of *sinners*, when *they* endure the curse of the law.

NATURAL *evils* which express the anger of God, are the *curse* of the law. Natural evils Christ suffer-

ed, and those to a high degree. These are all a curse, and the curse of God; and, evidently represented as the curse of the law. And when we consider the dignity of the person, and the excellency of the character of Christ; if the natural evils he suffered from the hand of God, were sufficient to express to the views of creatures, as high a degree of divine displeasure, as the natural evils which God brings on the sinner himself, when he executes the curse upon him; it can be no reflection upon Christ, nor imply the least defect in his character, to consider him as having endured the *curse of the law*, and *in this sense* having been made a curse for his people, that they might be the righteousness of God in him.

But it may, perhaps, be here objected, that "As "Christ was infinitely far from being, himself, an "object of the divine anger; the natural evils which "were brought upon him were no expressions of di-"vine displeasure, either against him, or against any "other person. It may be urged that God, in his "providence, put the Saviour into that trying situation "in which he lived and died, in order to give him "opportunity to exhibit the most exalted virtue, and "display the excellencies and glories of his own char-"acter to the best advantage. And if this were the "true reason of the sufferings of Christ, the evils "which he endured were so far from being any ex-"pressions of divine anger, that they were rather "marks of divine favor: And, therefore, in all the "sufferings that Christ endured, great and terrible as "they are, we can behold nothing more than marks "of favor and honor to the person of Christ."

In answer to this objection it may be replied, that the idea of the end of Christ's sufferings contained in the objection before us, however natural it may *be thought* to be in itself, is far from corresponding with

the representations given of it by the inspired writers. The *Scriptures* teach us that God's *sword* was awakened and drawn against Christ—that he was made a *curse;* and that this curse was *the curse of God. Here* he is represented as being made a *sin-offering*—being *bruised and put to grief by Jehovah*, and *wounded for our transgressions.* And this is language never made use of in the holy scriptures, to paint divine complacency and favor. *Swords* are not drawn against any one for any other purpose than that of expressing displeasure. *Favors* are not usually confered at the point of the *sword.* And if the evils which were brought on Christ, are to be considered in no other light than that of *divine favors* to the person who suffered ; we can see no propriety in their being called a *curse*, *the curse of God*, &c. If the sufferings of Christ were only marks of *divine favor*, and as it were *the post of honor* given to the great Captain of salvation ; *this idea* would have been much more easy and naturally conveyed by other and very different expressions from those that are made use of in the sacred writings. It is hard to see how *this* would authorize us to consider *Christ* as being made *a curse*, and being *pierced* by *God's* sword, the sword of divine vengeance. The post of honor is never considered as the *curse* of him who appoints to it: especially when that appointment is a *mark of distinction and favor.* And if the curse which *Christ* was made is not a token of divine anger ; if the sword of God which was awakened and drawn againnt *Christ*, and which actually executed him, and took away his life ; did not express divine anger ; a doubt may immediately arise whether God's curse *in any case whatever* really expresseth anger. If, in that case, it expressed *nothing* more than kind purposes toward the Saviour, where will be the evidence that, in any other case, it expresseth any thing more than kind, benevolent purposes toward the sufferer ? If *the curse of God*, *the curse of the law*, when

laid upon Christ, was no mark of divine displeasure; no evils, no sufferings whatever, merely from their being the curse of God, and the curse of the law, will exhibit divine anger. And of course the curses, the sanctions of the law, do not hold out divine indignation to view.

THE *word of God* is the authority by which we are to determine, both the *end* and the *import* of the sufferings of Christ. And, when we are *here* taught that Christ, in dying, *was made a curse*—that he was made so by Jehovah—that this curse which he was made was the *curse of God;* if the curses of God, and of his law, hold out anger and indignation to view, it cannot consistently be denied that the sufferings and death of Christ were indeed expressions of divine anger. Accordingly, the redemption of Christ's people is constantly and abundantly attributed, in the holy scriptures, to the *sufferings*, the *death*, the *blood* of the Saviour; and, by *his* being made a *curse*, are *they* redeemed from the curse of the law.

FURTHER; in confirmation of *this view* of the sufferings of Christ, as being expressive of the anger of God against sin, it is worthy of notice that the virtue of his atonement is constantly set to the score of his *sufferings*, both by Christ himself, and by his apostles. Thus Christ says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent "in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man *be* "*lifted up*; that whosoever believeth on him should "not perish, but have eternal life."(*y*) Again; "And "I *if I be lifted up from the earth*, will draw all men "unto me."(*z*) When his disciples were confounded on seeing him whom they believed to be the Messiah suffer death; immediately after his resurrection he reproves them in the following manner, "O fools, and

(*y*) John iii. 14, 15. (*z*) John xii. 32.

" slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have " spoken. Ought not Christ to have *suffered these* " *things*—? And he said unto them, These are the " words which I spake unto you while I was yet with " you, that all things must be fulfilled which were " written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, " and in the psalms concerning me. And said unto " them, thus it is written, and thus it *behoved Christ to* " *suffer* and to rise from the dead on the third day."(*a*) Accordingly, the efficacy of the atonement made by Christ is constantly represented as being in his *blood*. Speaking of Christ, the Apostle says, " In whom we " have redemption through his *blood*, the forgiveness " of sins, according to the riches of his grace."(*b*) And, the Apostle again saith that " without *shedding* " *of blood* there is no remission."(*c*) Therefore it is that " the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin :"(*d*) And, the robes of saints are said to be *made white in the blood of the Lamb.*(*e*)

CHRIST's *obedience* unto death was infinitely pleasing to the Father; and, as hath been before observed, of infinite importance. Without *this*, his *sufferings and death* could have been no atonement for sin. And, for his *obedience unto death* it is that *He* is highly exalted, and hath a name given him which is above every name.(*f*) Yet the *obedience* of Christ, important and glorious as it was, is never once spoken of as making atonement : Nor, are his disciples ever represented as being purged and saved by his *obedience* ; but, invariably, by his *blood*, his sufferings and death.

Now, if the whole efficacy of the death of Christ as an atonement for the sins of the world, consisted in the perfection of *his personal obedience* ; we know not how to account for it that this efficacy of it to cleanse

(*a*) Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 44, 46. (*b*) Ephes. i. 7. (*c*) Heb. ix. 22. (*d*) John i. 7. (*e*) Rev. vii. 14. (*f*) Phil. ii. 8, 9.

from sin, should be constantly represented in figurative language, and that too, when the idea of the perfection of this obedience is not, at all, heightened by the figure made use of to express it; but would have been, at least, as perfectly clear and intelligible, had it been said that his people were redeemed *by his obedience unto death.* Figurative language is not made use of, in the holy scriptures, unless it be where the ideas to be conveyed by it, are designed to be less obvious than if expressed in plainer terms; or, with a view to give them *greater* clearness and perspicuity. But, if the sufferings and death of the Saviour were of no other importance, as an atonement for sin, than as a testimony of the perfection and height of his obedience; it is hard to be accounted for, that the holy Ghost should constantly represent the efficacy of the atonement as being in the *death*, the *blood* of Christ: And much more so, that he should speak of Christ as being a *sin-offering*, and his *death* as being a *curse—the curse of God*, and the effect of *God's sword* drawn against him, and commissioned to smite and execute him; and, in this way represent Christ as falling a victim to divine justice.

These considerations, it is apprehended, sufficiently show that there was some further end to be answered by the *sufferings and death of Christ* than a *mere exhibition of the strength and perfection of his personal obedience:* And, that *this*, would by no means warrant that mode of expression which is frequently and abundantly made use of, by the inspired writers, in treating this important subject. To suppose that the *death of Christ* answered no other end than to illustrate his obedience, would, certainly, imply that the figures made use of in representing it, are bold and strong beyond any parallel to be found in the whole word of God; and that the images glow in colors in which it was never designed they should be viewed.

While, on the other hand, the foregoing observations, as would be but natural to suppose, was in fact the case, evidently bring into view the FATHER as sitting to hold the rights of government, while the SON was acting the part of a servant; and having himself a glorious and awfully majestic part to act, while a sin-offering is made by Christ, we behold the high and holy character of HIM to whom it is made; and, see the awful manifestations of that divine displeasure, the exhibitions of which can no more be suppressed, than God himself can cease to be infinitely holy; or can be restrained from expressing, in his government over a fallen world.

CHAP. VII.

In which it is shown that the anger of God which appeared, and was expressed, in the sufferings of Christ; was really against sinners.

SOME have apprehended that it is impossible the sufferings of an innocent person, should express anger against the guilty; And, on this ground have supposed it absurd to consider Christ as, in any sense, a *substitute*, in his sufferings, for sinners. Therefore against the idea of atonement being made by the *sufferings* of Christ, it is objected that "we cannot "comprehend how the punishment, or sufferings of "an *innocent person*, should express displeasure "against the guilty."

THIS objection implies that it is essential to the character of God, that in his providential government, he should treat every one according to his own character and deserts: And that as far as natural good and evil, brought on moral beings, express the divine approbation, or the contrary; the glory of God, and

the rectitude of his government requires that he confer only *good* on the righteous, and *evil* on the vicious. On this hypothesis, therefore, either one or the other of the following things must be true: viz.

1. THAT it is inconsistent with the character of God, and the rectitude and glory of his government, to exercise *mercy* to sinners in delivering them from the natural evils their sins deserve. For, according to the objection before us, in the rewards and punishments of the future world, God only expresseth his approbation and disapprobation of the several characters of the different persons who are the subjects of them. If it be impossible for God to express *displeasure* against *sinners*, by bringing natural evil on *Christ*; it must be equally impossible for God to express *approbation* of the character of *Christ*, by conferring natural good on *sinners*. If God can intelligibly express his approbation of the *obedience* of Christ by conferring *blessings* on sinners; he can intelligibly express his abhorrence of the *disobedience* of men, by laying the *curse* on Christ. The objection supposeth it absurd that there should be an interchange of persons, between Christ and sinners, as to the *blessing* and the *curse* of obedience and the reverse. And if this be absurd, the salvation of sinners is not to be considered as the reward of *Christ's* obedience; but of *their own* penitence and return to their duty. And consequently the design of Christ's coming into the world, could be no more than to bring the good news that *penitence* shall obtain pardon; and of his death, to seal the truth of it with his blood. On this supposition all the blessings that will ever be confered on the followers of Christ, in the future world, are to be considered only as so many marks of the divine approbation of their characters: And there is no other meritorious cause of the salvation of sinners, than their own penitence and return to their duty. This, it is

easy to see, at once excludes every idea of gospel *mercy*, and of the meritorious righteousness of Christ as a ground of the salvation of sinners. If the salvation of sinners be only a reward of their own penitence and obedience, all ideas of *gospel-grace* are wholly excluded. For, it is a *maxim* of the gospel that, to him that *worketh*, the reward is not reckoned *of grace*, but of debt.(*g*)

If it be essential to the glory of God that, in the *good* and *evil* he brings on his creatures, he should treat every one according to his deserts: the consequence is that, in his providential government in dispensing blessings and evils, he never doth, in fact, express any displeasure, in any way whatever, against those who are vessels of mercy. From no natural evil whatever, no adversity or sufferings, are we authorised to conclude that there is, or ever was, in the divine mind, the least displeasure against them for any sin they ever committed against God.

On this supposition it is manifest that it is not essential to the glory of God, and the rectitude of that government which he is actually exercising over men, that he ever should express displeasure against us, for any of our conduct, by bringing *natural evil* upon us. For, if, in consistency with the rectitude of this government, he may save a part of the human race without expressing his disapprobation of their conduct by *any natural evils whatever*; it is evident that the glory of this government could not be sullied, nor the rectitude of it rendered suspicious, by a total suspension of punishments: And, notwithstanding all the wickedness that has taken place; the divine government may appear perfectly equal and glorious, if no sinner be ever punished.

(*g*) Rom. iv. 4.

2. If it be admitted that it is essential to the glory of God, and the rectitude of his government, that his anger be in some way expressed, in his providence, against the wickedness of those whom he pardons and saves, the objection before us must imply that divine anger against the sins of men, may be manifested to a degree fully sufficient to support the honor of the government of God, without any *natural evils*. The objection supposes that the natural evils brought on Christ did not express divine anger against the sins of men; And, *that*, for this obvious reason, that the punishment, or sufferings of an innocent person, cannot express displeasure against the guilty. If, therefore, these natural evils which were brought on the person of Christ, were not expressions of divine anger against the sins of men; they did not *in any way* express divine anger: because, it is on all hands admitted that they expressed no degree of anger against Christ.

If, then, in the sufferings and death of Christ, God expressed no displeasure against the wickedness of the world: it is manifest that, by *no natural evils whatever* doth he express anger against sinners whom he pardons and saves. And therefore, whatever be the rebellion and wickedness of men, the honor and rectitude of divine government by no means infer a necessity of *natural evils;* but, the glory and dignity of the character of God may be fully supported without the execution of punishments.

If, in the sufferings and death of Christ, God expressed any degree of anger whatever; it must have been *against sinners:* because, no degree of it existed against Christ. But if, on the other hand, the *natural evils* endured by the Saviour, were no expressions of divine anger; it most clearly follows that God may, consistently with the rectitude and glory of his gov-

ernment, pardon and save sinners without expressing *by natural evils* any degree of displeasure against them for their sins. And, if God may do this consistently with the rectitude and glory of his *government;* he may, also, consistently with the *moral law*, which is the great *rule* of his moral government. For, whatever God may do consistently with the honor of his *government*, he may also do, consistently with the honor of his law: And, of course, the *law itself* doth not require that the sinner should be *punished.* So long, therefore, as we believe that, neither the glory of the divine character, the rectitude of his government, nor the honor of his law, require that sinners should be *punished;* we cannot possibly, with the least reason, entertain any fears or expectations of future punishment: but, must, of necessity, view *all the awful threatnings* of the law only as so many *scare-crows* held out to terrify weak minds.

THESE are the obvious and necessary consequences of denying the *necessity of punishments*, in the divine government, when *moral evil hath actually taken place.* To *this* conclusion will the sentiment that God may consistently pardon and save sinners without expressing, *by any natural evils*, his displeasure against them, evidently lead, and, in *this* will it manifestly terminate.

BUT, if it be granted, on the other hand, that the honor of the divine government forbids that sinners should be pardoned and saved without God's expressing in some way, by *natural evils*, his righteous displeasure against them, for their sins; it must *of course* be that this displeasure be expresssed by natural evils brought on an *innocent person:* because the salvation in question, is from *such and only from such* natural evils as the sinner deserves. If this displeasure be expressed by natural evils brought on the *sin-*

ner himself, the sinner then is *not saved.* It must, of necessity, be therefore, that if it be expressed by natural evils brought on *any one*, it must be, by their being brought on one *who is not a sinner:* And, therefore, displeasure against the *guilty* is expressed by sufferings brought on the *innocent.*

To say, therefore, that displeasure against the *guilty*, cannot be expressed by evils brought on an *innocent person*, at once denies, either the *necessity* of punishment; or *room* for pardon. For if it be essential to the glory of God, that he express displeasure against wickedness *by any natural evils;* these evils must be endured, either by the *guilty*, or by some one who is *innocent.* If they are endured, by the wicked themselves, the sinner *is not*, yea *cannot be pardoned.* If the sinner be pardoned, and the displeasure of God nevertheless expressed in *natural evils;* it must of necessity be that this is done in natural evils brought on one who is *innocent.* Thus evidently doth the objection under consideration deny any necessity, arising either from the law, or the character of God, that sinners should ever be punished; or, it denies that sinners of mankind will ever be delivered from that punishment which is their just desert according to the tenor of the divine law.

But it may perhaps be denied that either of these consequences are involved in the sentiment that *the anger of God against the wicked cannot be expressed in the sufferings of one who is righteous.* It may be urged that "as the obedience of Christ, especially "under very heavy and severe trials, expressed a very "high degree of love to *holiness;* this of course, exhibited a proportionable aversion from sin. And as "Christ was *God manifest in the flesh*, whatever hatred "and aversions were expressed by him, were the hatred—the aversions of GOD. And therefore *God's*

"hatred of iniquity appeared and was expressed in "the *obedience* of Christ. His acting uniformly "against the cause of sin, very naturally and necessa- "rily expressed his displeasure against the sinner."

But in reply to this reasoning it may be observed:

1. That the objector, in taking this course, splits upon the very rock he means to avoid. It is urged that the supposition, that *the displeasure of God against the wicked, cannot be seen in the sufferings of an innocent person*, implies, either that the wicked will be universally punished; or, that the character and law of God do not require that God's displeasure against the wicked should ever be expressed in any *natural evils*, *any sufferings* whatever. The argument before us admits that the divine being may so act against sin, and oppose it in such a manner *in his own conduct*, as to render *punishments* unnecessary: Or, at least to render it consistent with the spirit of the law to forgive *penitents* without expressing *by natural evils*, any displeasure against them for their sins. But if God may forgive *some sinners*, without testifying his anger against them by natural evils; it is difficult to see why he may not *all*. If the honor of the divine law may be so supported *without natural evils*, as to make it consistent with the character of the governor of the world, to exercise his grace in bringing *some* to repentance, and then forgiving them; we see not why it may not *all*. We can see no other objection against the salvation of *all* than this, viz. That the character and conduct of God could not appear to harmonize with his perfect law, unless he expressed displeasure against the rebellion of men by *natural evils*. But the argument which pleads that God's displeasure is *sufficiently* expressed, to answer the purposes of law and government, in the *obedience* of Christ, removes this objection. And, therefore, it implies that the hon-

or of God's law and moral government may be supported without the execution of punishments: At least, that there is no necessity of God's testifying against the wickedness of men by *natural evils*, in order to its being consistent with his character to pardon and save sinners.

2. It may justly be scrupled whether it can, with propriety, be said that the holy and obedient life of Christ *expressed any divine displeasure* against men for their sins:—At least, any disposition, in the divine mind, to *punish* men for their sins. "God sent "not his Son into the world to *condemn* the world; "but that the world through him might be saved."(*g*) Christ's disposition to *obey* the law, was *acted out and expressed* in his life on earth. And whatever reasons there might be, from any considerations, to suppose he entertained a disposition within himself to *punish* sinners; still his own *personal obedience* to the law did not *express it;* in *this* it was not acted out in its proper and natural fruits. This disposition of the divine redeemer remains to be exhibited and displayed on another day. And if there were no other *expression* of divine displeasure against sin necessary, than *this;* we have no reason to expect that any other expression of it will, in fact, be ever made. Accordingly,

3. If God's being manifest in flesh, and acting against the *cause of sin* in a holy and obedient life, and subduing the power of it in his people, be all the way in which it is necessary his anger against sin should be expressed; we have abundant reason to conclude, that neither the spirit of the law, nor the honour of the divine government require it should ever be expressed in any other way. And therefore punishments

(*g*) John iii. 17.

are far from being *necessary* under the divine government. For, on this hypothesis, God would appear to act more decidedly and completely against the cause of sin, and so of course express higher displeasure against it, by wholly eradicating it out of the heart of every moral being, and setting all his creatures above the reach of natural evil.

THESE are but the natural and obvious consequences of the opinion that the displeasure of God against men, for their sins, was not expressed in the sufferings and death of Christ.

AS an evidence that the sufferings of Christ were expressions of divine anger against *men* for their sins; it is to be observed,

1. THAT *these sufferings* were in reality, expressions of divine anger. *These* were a *curse*, the *curse of God*, which can, in the nature of things, be no other than an expression of anger. The sword of God, the sword of divine justice, was called up, and commissioned against Christ; and smote, and took away his life. But it is unnecessary to repeat what has been said on this subject in a former chapter. We proceed,

2. To observe that the anger of God which appeared and was expressed in the sufferings of Christ, *could not be against the person of the Saviour*. Christ always did those things that pleased the Father.(*h*) He is God's beloved Son in whom he is well pleased.(*i*) How often was the voice of God heard from heaven, declaring concerning Christ, while he was on earth, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."(*k*) Never did the Father view this Son of his

(*h*) John viii. 29. (*i*) Matt. xii. 18. (*k*) Matt. iii. 17, and xvii. 5.

love with greater complacency and delight, than when he was making his soul an offering for sin: And never did he feel a more infinite tenderness for him, than while he was wounding him for *our* transgressions, and bruising him *for our iniquities.*

3. GOD is *invariably* displeased at sin; and, he never has the least degree of anger against any of his creatures, but *sinners.* The law of God, which expresseth his *very mind and will*, curseth those, and only those, who continue not in all things written in the book of it, to do them. When any of God's creatures commit sin, they provoke his anger. But, where there is no sin, it cannot be that God is offended. And, as God *is* angry with the wicked every day; (*l*) every exhibition of divine anger must be against sinners.

4. IT is evident, and is generally confessed, that the happy and blessed fruits of *Christ's glorious righteousness*, are confered upon *sinners of mankind*, and enjoyed by them. The Apostle saith, "as by the of-"fence of one, judgment came upon all men unto con-"demnation; even so by the *righteousness* of one, "the free gift came upon all men unto justification of "life. For, as by one man's disobedience, many were "made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall "many be made righteous." (*m*) And *this one person*, by whose righteousness the free gift comes upon men to justification of life, the connection of the Apostle's discourse evidently proves to be the *Lord Jesus Christ.* "Therefore" he says again, "by *the deeds of* "*the law* there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: "for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now "the *righteousness of God without the law* is manifes-"ted, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; "even the righteousness of God which is by *faith of*

(*l*) Ps. vii. 11. (*m*) Rom. v. 18, 19.

"*Jesus Christ* unto all, and upon all them that be-"lieve."(*n*) These passages, with many others in the Scriptures, make it evident that sinners of mankind receive and enjoy the rewards, the happy fruits of the righteousness of Christ: And, that the benefits of his righteousness are, of grace, bestowed upon sinners. This is the true and only proper import of the *imputation* of Christ's righteousness to believers—— This is to have his righteousness *imputed* to them; for *them* to receive and enjoy the benefits, the happy fruits of it.

ADD to these considerations, the frequent and express declarations of the word of God respecting the *end* of the sufferings of Christ, can there be any remaining doubt whether the displeasure of God which was exhibited in them, were against sinners? No point can be made more evident by *express divine declarations* than this. Here, we are told that Christ "was made under the law, that he might redeem them "that are under the law, that they might receive the "adoption of sons."(*o*) Here, we are taught that Christ united himself to his people, by a strong and invincible love, that he might recover and save them. The nearness of his relation to his people, and the intimacy of the union which subsists between them, are such as to require the strongest similitudes, the boldest metaphors, to express them. He is the *vine* of which they are the branches:(*p*) the *husband* of whom the church is the *spouse*:(*q*) the *head* of which his people are the *body*; even so that *they* are members of his *flesh*, and of his *bones*.(*r*)

THIS is the relation in which we are taught, by the unerring oracles of truth, that Christ stands to his peo-

(*n*) Rom. iii. 20, 22. (*o*) Galat iv. 4, 5. (*p*) John xv. 5.
(*q*) Isaiah liv. 5, 6. (*r*) Ephesians v. 30.

ple. And, standing *in this relation* to them, it is expressly declared by the Spirit of truth, that he was wounded for *their transgressions*, and bruised for *their iniquities* :(*s*) that, he was made a *curse for them* :(*t*) that, he was delivered, (that is to death,) *for our offences* :(*u*) that, he was once *offered to bear the sins of many* ;(*w*) and, that he *bore our sins* on the tree.(*x*) It is expressly asserted that Christ *died for the ungodly*—that he *died for us* :(*y*) that, he *suffered for the unjust*, that he might bring them to God :(*z*) that, he was *sacrificed for us*.(*a*) And, to close the whole, Christ himself tells us that he came *to give his life a ransom for many* ; and was *the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep*.(*b*)

BESIDE the very unscriptural consequences which necessarily flow from a denial of the possibility that the *anger of God against sinners should appear and be expressed in the sufferings of an innocent person* ; these passages of scripture, together with the observations immediately preceding, are so many concurring proofs, and unequivocal testimonies that, in the sufferings of Christ, *this was in fact the case*. And, all the mighty power which Christ displayed while on earth ; every miracle that he wrought ; and, more still, if possible, his triumphant resurrection and ascension to glory ; together with all the marvellous effects of it, which have since appeared upon earth ; are so many additional testimonies, so many irrefragable proofs that *the righteous displeasure of God, which shone in the sufferings of the Saviour*, had really, for its object, *the sins of men*.

IF, the Deity himself had been about to contrive the most effectual means for giving conviction, to all

(*s*) Isaiah liii. 5. (*t*) Galat. iii. 13. (*u*) Romans iv. 25.
[*w*] Heb. ix. 28. [*x*] 1 Peter ii. 24. [*y*] Romans v. 6, 8.
[*z*] 1 Peter iii. 18. [*a*] 1 Cor. v. 7. [*b*] John x. 11, 15.

creatures, that the anger which burned *in the sufferings of his dear Son*, was not against *him*, but against *sinful men:* What could he have done more, what more effectual method could he have taken, to ascertain such a truth? To see the fruits of divine anger alight upon the immaculate Lamb of God, when he came to deliver his people from the power of sin, and from the wrath and curse of God; and, then, behold the people of Christ, who are themselves infinitely guilty, reaping the happy fruits of divine righteousness; so strongly indicates, in itself, an interchange of persons, between Christ and his people, as to sufferings and rewards, as hardly leaves room for a doubt whether this were really the case. Under *these circumstances*, the express declarations of the word of God must, surely be sufficient to put the matter out of all dispute; and, leave full conviction in every candid mind, that the *sufferings of Christ* were, in reality, expressions of divine displeasure *against men for their sins.*

But, to all this it is objected that "The rules of "*righteousness* never admit, that the *innocent* should "be punished for the *guilty*. If, as *Abraham*, the "father of the faithful, reasoned, that it be far from "God to slay the *righteous with the wicked*, and, "that the *righteous should be as the wicked:* (*c*) much "farther must it be from God to slay the righteous "*instead* of the wicked."

This objection, it is to be observed, as well as those to which we have before been attending, supposes that, if *any* punishments are necessary in the divine government, they must be laid only on the guilty; if it be necessary that God express anger by *any natural evils*, they must be inflicted on those who deserve them: And, therefore, if it be consistent with the

(*c*) Genesis xviii. 25.

divine rectitude *in any instance* to pardon the sinner, it must be that the rectitude of divine government does not require that the anger of God against sinners should ever be expressed by *natural evils*: And, consequently, that the *law* of God doth not require it.

THIS objection, at least, supposeth that the law of God doth not require that *in every instance* he should express displeasure against sinners by inflicting *natural evils* upon them: and therefore, that there is not a disposition in the divine mind, that could ever be truly and properly delineated in this way. But, if the law and character of God do not require that this should be done in *every instance*, we cannot see with what propriety it should be done in *any*. And, if this be the case, we may fairly conclude it never would have been done, even if Christ had not come into the world. According to this hypothesis, therefore, we must suppose that the true end of the coming of Christ was to relieve the minds of men from those unnecessary fears which *the law* of God, unless smoothed and softened by some milder and more generous dispensation, would necessarily beget in them. But if this were the true design of the coming of Christ, it is difficult to see how it could with propriety be prophesied of him, that he should *magnify the law and make it honorable*; (*d*) and how *this* could be a ground of God's being well pleased for his *righteousness'* sake. Surely the Saviour himself had not this view of the end of his mission, when he declared, "I am "not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill. For, "verily I say unto you, *till heaven and earth pass*, "*one jot, or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the* "*law, till all be fulfilled.*(*e*)

FURTHER; the objection supposeth that, though it

[*d*] Isaiah xlii. 21. [*e*] Matthew v. 17, 18.

be inconsistent with the righteousness of the Governor of the world, to treat the *righteous* as the *wicked*, yet, the nature of the divine government is such as doth not require that the *wicked* should be *distinguished* from the righteous; but admits that the *rewards* of righteousness may be equally and indiscriminately bestowed on the *wicked*, and on the *righteous*. And what ideas of *government* remain, after we have adopted those modes and rules of administration which equally admit the righteous and the wicked to the *rewards of obedience*, it must be difficult for any one to ascertain.

It is readily admitted that it would be inconsistent with the rules of common justice for the Deity, by his *mere authority and power to subject* an innocent person to sufferings. But the objector himself admits that the holy and innocent Saviour of the world, was indeed subjected to many hardships and sufferings. And we must deny an universal divine providence, unless we suppose that Christ was subjected to these sufferings by the *power and will of God*. Therefore, fact itself opposeth the very spirit of the objection; unless it be urged, in vindication of God's righteousness, that *volenti non fit injuria;* and that Christ, *willingly and cheerfully*, for the purposes of the general good, *submitted to these natural evils*. But if this maxim be adopted as a solution of the difficulty which *real fact* presents to us in the divine government; it will equally afford us a solution of the difficulty contained in the objection before us. For if it be consistent with the character and righteousness of God to bring a small degree of natural evil on an innocent person, upon his freely consenting to it; it is equally consistent to bring greater degrees, if he hath the subject's free consent. If the consent of the subject will justify it in one case, it will also in the other. And if it was a reality that Christ willingly subjected him-

self to those natural evils which the Father in fact laid upon him, for the purposes of the general good: the supposition that *these evils* were expressions of divine anger against sinners, will not at all obscure the *evidence* of the righteousness of God.

If to promote the general good, the Saviour freely and voluntarily subjected himself to those natural evils which were the proper fruits and testimonies of divine anger against the sins of men, there was no more injustice done him in their being laid upon him, than if he had subjected himself voluntarily to natural evils on any other account, or for any other reward. And if the consideration of a *reward*, would justify laying evils upon him *on any other account*, or *for any other purpose;* it would, also, justify laying evils upon him as *expressions of divine anger against sinners*, in case he could receive a sufficient and full reward. But if the general good of the universe were better secured, and more highly advanced in *this way*, than in any other, the glory of God in the salvation of sinners will be esteemed, by the Saviour, a full and ample reward for all his hard labor and sufferings. Accordingly this *is* the way in which the holy Scriptures teach us that the Saviour of the world is rewarded for the arduous work which he accomplished by his death. "He shall see of the travel of his "soul, and shall be *satisfied:* by his knowledge shall "my righteous servant justify many, for he shall "bear their iniquities."(*f*)

Whatever maxims be adopted in vindication of the divine *righteousness* in bringing on the innocent Saviour those natural evils which he *actually* endured, may be improved to equal advantage, in vindicating the *righteousness* of God in expressing his anger a-

(*f*) Isaiah liii. 11.

gainst *sinners* in the *pains and sufferings of the Saviour.*

THERE is certainly no natural absurdity in supposing that Christ should freely consent to *bear the iniquities* of his people; and that, he consenting to it, the Father should *lay them upon him.* Nor is there in this method of the recovery of sinners, the least appearance of unrighteousness in God, or *injustice* to the Redeemer. And when the holy Scriptures are so very full and express to the case, as hath been already shown; no difficulty can remain in supposing that the anger of God which appeared and was expressed in the sufferings of Christ, was, in reality, against sinners.

CHAP. VIII.

Shewing the Consistency of full Atonement with free Pardon.

MANY have supposed that the opinion of the sinner's being *pardoned* upon *full atonement* made for his sins, is a palpable absurdity. And, therefore, that the doctrine of *atonement*, and the doctrines of *free grace* are utterly irreconcileable. "For," say they, "when we have received the debt, what *grace* is there "in freeing the debtor? And *that*, whether the money "be paid by the debtor himself, or by some other per-"son." Were this a similitude which would properly apply, in the case before us; it is acknowledged there would be a difficulty. But, this objection arises from a wrong construction of the doctrine of atonement.

IN order to shew the consistency of *atonement* with the *free grace* of God in the salvation of sinners; nothing further will be necessary than to state,

I. THE nature of *pardon* and *grace:* and shew in what cases, and under what circumstances, the sinner may be the subject of them. And,

II. To shew what it is that constitutes the nature, and makes the essence of atonement.

I. WE are to state the nature of *pardon* and *grace;* and shew in what cases, and under what circumstances, the sinner may be the subject of them.

THE *gospel-idea* of grace is, in general, that of *good* conferred where *evil* is deserved. It is essential to the idea of *grace* that the subject *deserve* evil. Accordingly, our first parents, while innocent, were not the subjects of *grace* in their enjoyment of the favor of God. "To him that worketh is the reward not "reckoned of *grace*, but of *debt*."(*g*) Therefore,

1. WHEN *they* enjoy the divine *favor*, who really deserve and merit the *anger* of God; they are *then* the subjects of *grace*. When men enjoy *blessings and good*, in the place of *curses and evils* which are justly due to them; they are the subjects of grace. Only grace can relieve us from evils and sufferings which we deserve.

2. WE are, therefore, of necessity subjects of grace in being delivered from evils which we *justly deserve;* and, on the other hand, in having blessings conferred upon us of which we are *utterly unworthy*. No consideration whatever can take away the *grace* of these blessings so long as our desert of the contrary evils remains.

3. WHEN no injustice would be done to men in

(*g*) Romans iv. 4.

casting them off forever, it cannot otherwise be than that they should be the subjects of grace in being saved. If men do not *deserve* eternal destruction, it will necessarily be an *injury* to them to inflict it on them. But, when men feel themselves to deserve this fate, it will be impossible for them to view it as any other than grace to be delivered from it. It must, therefore be grace in God to deliver men from those evils which their sins justly deserve. To be saved from a punishment which we have truly merited by our wickedness, must of necessity be a mercy to us. To suppose otherwise would imply that we *justly* deserve punishment, and yet that *justice* requires we should be exempted from it. It is impossible for the sinner's desert of punishment to cease, otherwise than by having actually endured it. Therefore, it is impossible that it should be otherwise than *mercy to the sinner*, to save him from the punishment which he justly deserves for his wickedness. In whatever way this salvation comes to him, whether through an atonement, or not; still, to him it is grace; he is the subject of *grace*.

We may consider in the next place,

II. What it is that constitutes the essence of atonement: And *this*, in order to know whether *atonement for sin* brings obligation on the *justice* of God to deliver and save the sinner.

Respecting *atonement*, it is to be observed that it summarily consists in an *exhibition* of the righteous displeasure of God against sin, made in some other way than in the punishment of the sinner. The real abhorrence in which God holds the character of the sinner, would be no more than truly and fully expressed in his eternal punishment. It is of the utmost importance that this disposition of the divine mind should

appear in the government of God; because this is his glory. Without this infinite purity and hatred of iniquity, he could not be GOD—be absolutely perfect. If divine government can be administered in such a way, without the punishment of the sinner, as properly to delineate this disposition of the divine mind, to the views of creatures; the divine character will not suffer, by the pardon of the sinner. And in whatever way this disposition of the divine mind be delineated; whether it be in the punishment of the sinner, or in some other mode not less expressive; the ends of divine government, in general, are answered. One great end of the coming and death of *Christ*, was to delineate this disposition of the divine mind, and make a full and sensible exhibition of it. In *his* sufferings and death this divine purity, and hatred of iniquity, were sensibly and gloriously expressed. In the *sufferings of Christ* God gives us to see that his own infinite mind is full of displeasure against sinners. *Christ's* sufferings and death are a glass in which that character of God which we read in the threatnings and curses of the law may become visible and conspicuous. After all that *Christ* has done and suffered, if God pardons and saves the sinner for *his* sake; it will afford us no reason to believe that there is less aversion in the divine mind from the character of the sinner, than the threatnings and curses of the law would naturally suggest. In this way, therefore, the honor of the law is preserved, though the sinner be saved.

VIEWED in this light, it is easy to see that the *atonement* infers no obligation on the *justice* of God, to pardon and save the sinner. The objection is, not that the purposes of grace cannot be answered if the sinner be not saved, when atonement is made for his sins; but, that *atonement* implies an obligation, in *justice*, to save the sinner. But, if *justice* requires the salvation of the sinner, the Governor of the world

nust be guilty of *injustice* in damning him. To suppose that it would be *unjust*, in God, to damn the sinner, evidently implies that a *just* and *holy God* hath not displeasure enough in him, for this purpose. And herefore that *such a degree of displeasure* could be nade visible, neither in the atonement, nor in any other way. But, that such a degree of displeasure against sinners hath, in reality, no existence in the divine mind, at once destroys all notions of gospel grace, in heir salvation; and *that*, whether they be saved hrough an atonement, or without it.

If such a degree of displeasure against sinners hath a real existence in the divine mind; no external *evidence* of its existence can, possibly, render it unjust for God to destroy the sinner. The higher the evidence of this disposition rises, the more must it appear *grace* in God, to pardon and save the sinner. Yea, the whole evidence we have of its being grace must arise from the sensible demonstration of the existence of this *pure and holy* displeasure in the mind of God. So long as we consider the divine character as the standard of perfection, we cannot believe a creature to deserve any evil which *God* hath not displeasure enough to bring upon him. But, the more sensible we are of the anger of God, so long as we view it to be just and righteous; the more will it appear an act of *divine grace* to deliver the object of it from punishment.

The death and sufferings of Christ are a glass in which we may behold the feelings of the divine mind toward sinners; and, read an abhorrence of their characters; a displeasure against them, which eternal destruction would no more than fully express. Had we no sensible evidence of the existence of this disposition, in the mind of God; we could have no evidence that the salvation of sinners is of *grace*. And had it not been for the coming and work of Christ, we could

not have had sensible evidence of this, otherwise than in the actual destruction of sinners. Had God saved sinners without any atonement, his *government* would have furnished no evidence of any such aversion of the divine mind from the character of sinners. Consequently, there could not have been evidence that the salvation of sinners is of *grace*.

ACCORDING to this view of the matter, the *atonement* is so far from being inconsistent with the doctrine of *grace*, in the salvation of sinners, that it exceedingly illustrates it. *Atonement* is so far from proving that it is not an act of grace to pardon and save sinners; that, above every other consideration whatever, it shows it to be pure grace. Yea, the *atonement of Christ* is so far from obscuring *divine grace*, in the salvation of sinners; that, *without this*, grace could not have appeared. Had God saved sinners without doing any thing to vindicate the honor of his law, and witness his infinite hatred of iniquity; it could not have been evident that this salvation is of grace. The atonement, therefore, is so far from obscuring the lusture of divine *grace*, that it greatly adds to it: Yea, it is absolutely essential to the evidence of *any grace whatever*, in the salvation of sinners.

GOD, himself exerciseth no *grace*, excepting toward *sinners*. They, who are no sinners, cannot be the objects of grace. The divine righteousness itself is full security, for the innocent, against every evil. *Grace*, in God, is the bestowment of good upon those whose character he righteously abhors. *Grace*, therefore, as a quality of the divine character, can be seen no farther than his righteous abhorrence of the object of it becomes visible. The glory and greatness of *divine grace*, can be estimated only by the detestation in which God holds the character of the object toward whom it is exercised. Therefore, by how much the

more sensible the demonstrations of divine *anger* are, against the character of the sinner, by so much the more conspicuous is the *grace* of God, in his pardon and salvation. The clearer views we have of the displeasure of God, on one hand; the more lively apprehension shall we have of divine grace on the other.

VIEWING the atonement, therefore, as a glass in which the *righteousness* of God may be seen; instead of obscuring the lustre of divine *grace*, in the salvation of sinners, it greatly increases it. Yea, the atonement is the only glass in which the true beauty and glory of the free, sovereign grace of God can be seen.

OBJ. "IT is a beauty in the character of the civil "magistrate *to pardon*; and, *this* without any atone-"ment; which may, nevertheless, be termed *grace*."

ANS. COULD human laws be framed with such perfection as that their penalties should express the displeasure of the community *only in cases where the public good requires it should exist*; *pardon* could in no case be, either consistently exercised by the supreme magistrate, or appear to be *of grace*. Were human laws thus perfect, it would be injurious to the public *to pardon*, in any case whatever; and absurd to lodge a power to exercise it, in any branch of the executive authority. Pardon, in this case, would be so far from partaking of the real nature of *grace*, that it would be evident *injustice*. For the penalties of the law could never be incurred, excepting in cases where the common good requires that a public *odium* should be exercised and expressed. Therefore, from the propriety of *pardons* in civil government, we can infer nothing concerning the propriety and beauty of pardons, in the divine. And, should we admit as the case now actually is, that it is an act of *grace*, in the civil magistrate to pardon without atonement; it could

not, however, be from thence inferred that it would be *grace in God*, even in any instance to forgive the sinner without an atonement.

If the displeasure of God exist in every case wherein the penalties of the divine law threaten it; pardon without an atonement, would be so far from being an act of *grace*, that it would be an *injury* to the public: And, for this obvious reason, that the divine displeasure *exists* in no instances whatever, but in those wherein the good of the universe requires it should be exercised. *This* may certainly be concluded from the perfect and infinite regard the divine Being has for the greatest good of the universe. But, in every case wherein the universal good requires that divine displeasure should *exist and be exercised;* it is exceedingly evident that the same principle requires it should also be *expressed.* Therefore, pardon cannot consistently be bestowed without an *atonement:* Nor could it, without *this*, be an act of *grace.*

These observations give us to see the reason why the scheme of the salvation of sinners, through the atonement of Christ, is so much celebrated, in the gospel, for its consummate and unsearchable wisdom: And why a *crucified Christ* is represented as *the power of God and the wisdom of God.*(*h*) No wisdom, but that which is absolutely and infinitely perfect, could ever have found a way wherein the *sinner* could be pardoned, and yet the *public good* be saved: because *God* is not offended, nor hath the least disposition to punish, excepting in those cases wherein the public good requires that his displeasure be expressed. Could this displeasure be made to appear, and yet the public good be secured; pardon, in that case, might be consistently bestowed; and, would appear

(*h*) 1 Cor. i. 24.

to be a glorious act of *divine grace*. Nothing but the *atonement of Christ* effects these ends; and, nothing like *this* bestows such lustre and glory on *divine sovereign grace*.

CHAP. IX.

Shewing in what way it may be accounted for, that the sufferings of Christ should be exceedingly great.

IN order to see a possibility that the sufferings of Christ might have been very extreme, notwithstanding the absolute perfection of his *moral character*, we are to observe,

1. THAT the ground of happiness and misery in creatures, doth not lie *merely* in the mind, independently of all other considerations.

CERTAIN kinds, both of happiness, and of misery, are peculiar to certain particular temperaments of mind. But, susceptibility of pleasure and pain, is common to all creatures, whether good, or bad. It is not *the virtuous only*, who are susceptible of happiness; or, *the vicious*, of misery. Had this been the case, the happiness and misery of creatures would be the measure of their *moral characters*, and exactly proportionate to the degrees of their virtue, or vice. Constant experience and observation prove that, as *holiness and happiness* are not *in the nature of things* necessarily connected together; neither are *sin* and *misery*. All agree that Christ endured *some natural evil*: And, all know that sinners enjoy *much natural good*. Holy creatures are therefore susceptible of sufferings; and, sinful ones, of enjoyment. And, were it otherwise, there would be, neither occasion, nor room for moral government: But, virtue would always bring its own

reward; and vice, its own punishment. *Happiness* consists, not in the *exercise of desire*, but, its *gratification*; And, *misery*, not in the *exercise of sinful affection*, but in something which is *disagreeable*.

God hath *established* an indissoluble connection between holiness in this world, and happiness in the next; and, between persevering wickedness here, and complete misery hereafter. This is essential to the most perfect moral government. But, were these connections originated by the mere nature of things, the necessity of a day of judgment would be wholly superseded: And, every creature would even now, enjoy all the rewards which are annexed to the practice of virtue; or, feel all the misery which is the just desert of sin. It is, therefore, manifest that the natural *dependence* which is universally found in *creatures*, whatever be their moral characters, renders them susceptible of *good* and *evil*, of *pleasure* and *pain*. There is, therefore, no *natural inconsistency* in supposing that the creature, who is wholly vicious, may enjoy much natural good; or, that one who is wholly virtuous, may suffer extreme misery. Therefore,

2. There is no apparent difficulty in supposing that the man Jesus Christ might endure a very great and extreme weight of suffering. It was as truly compatible with the power of God to inflict pain upon this Son of his love, as on any other creature; and, to cause distress to rise to a very great height in him. It is inconsistent with the nature of things to suppose that Christ should suffer those horrors of an accusing conscience, which will make no inconsiderable part of the sufferings of the damned, in hell; and, with the very design of his coming, to imagine that he should endure, even for a moment, that despair, which will make a very bitter part of the pains of God's enemies. There are, however,

other considerations from whence distress might arise: And, such views of things might croud in upon his pure and holy mind, as could not fail of being extremely painful.

IT is to be remembered that the Lord Jesus Christ was truly *a man;* possessed of all the innocent passions and feelings of *human nature.* And all the sufferings, the painful sensations he ever endured, were they greater or less, were in his *human nature*, and *confined to it.* It was the *human nature* of Christ that suffered: *an human nature*, however, that was exceedingly dignified, and its powers greatly enlarged by its union to the *divine:*——a consideration which, instead of diminishing, greatly increased his *susceptibility* of distress.

CHRIST being thus possessed of the passions and feelings of human nature, there is no natural absurdity in supposing him, however free from sin, yet capable of very painful sensations. And as all pain is really seated in the *mind*, it is far from being unsupportable that the power of God might communicate such views of things to the man Jesus Christ, as could not fail of being very distressing to him. There is nothing absurd in the supposition that God might communicate, to the mind of Christ, a very clear view, and lively sense of his just and infinite displeasure against those whom the man, Jesus, came to save: And as little absurdity in supposing that *this view and sense of divine anger*, should greatly *exercise* the mind of Christ. And as this is a case very supposable, there is also a visible propriety in it: As we can hardly understand how the mind of Christ should, without it, clearly comprehend the greatness of the work he had undertaken; and how arduous a thing it was to redeem his people from the

curse of the law, that they might be the righteousness of God in him.

As the mind of Christ was unquestionably, susceptible of clear views, and a very lively sense of divine wrath against sinners; it is no less conceivable that these views, this sense, should be extremely painful and distressing to him. If there be any difficulty in supposing that a sense of divine wrath against sinners, should be very distressing to the man Jesus Christ: it must arise from one or other of these considerations, viz.

1. THAT this wrath was not against the person of Christ: Or,

2. THAT the large and extended views of things, which his union to the divine nature would necessarily suppose him to be possessed of, would as certainly prevent pain of mind; as the clear, full light of heaven will prevent it, in the saints who are spectators of the vengeance actually executed on the final enemies of God: Or,

3. THAT the *beauty* of the divine character which shone in that displeasure of God against sinners, which was exhibited in view to the mind of Christ; would necessarily occasion the manifestation of it to be pleasing instead of painful.

1. THE first objection is, that the wrath of God, a view of which was communicated to the mind of Christ, was not against him personally, but against sinners. According to this objection we are to remember, it is as hard to conceive that a view of divine wrath against sinners should give the *least degree* of pain to the mind of Christ, as that it should *fill it* with distress. For that object which is capable of ministering

any degrees of pain, if it be of sufficient magnitude, may fill the mind with anguish. And if such views of the anger of God against those whom Christ came to save, could be communicated to his pure mind, as would affect him with the least uneasiness and concern; the communications might be so enlarged as to raise uneasiness and sorrow to a very great height.

But if a sense and view of divine anger against men, could give no pain to the mind of Christ *because he was not the object;* it must have been because he was susceptible only of pleasures and pains that were *merely personal;* which would be to reproach him with that same selfish, contracted spirit, which he came to eradicate from his people. This would suppose that he felt no interest in his church; and that, too, at the very time he was laying down his life for them.

It is very manifest that the interest we have in a person, or an object, is the thing that gives spring to our concern about it. And however *foreign* the object may be from *our persons or selves*, yet an interest of *our affections* in it, lays a foundation for our deriving from it, either joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain. If the interest of the community, for instance, engages our attention and affections, more than any interest that is merely personal; whatever affects the community, will more sensibly exercise our minds, than any thing that merely affects our own private interest. A *follower* of Christ, it may easily be imagined, has such an interest in his kingdom, as more sensibly to feel the injuries that are done to it, than any private injury to himself. And if vengeance must be directed against himself personally, or against the interest of his adored Saviour; the latter may appear to him of such superior importance, as necessarily engages him to sacrifice his own to that of his glorious

Lord. And if this be the effect which *the spirit of Christ* produces in the hearts of *men*; there can surely be no difficulty in conceiving that the affection which Christ himself had for his church, rendered him susceptible of great pain, in view of the just and awful displeasure of God against his people for their sins. It would indeed be utterly inconceivable that Christ should so love his people, as to lay down his life, and become a curse for them; and yet be wholly unaffected with a sense of the heat of that divine anger which he saw was against them.

THE reason why the mind is affected in a view of objects, is not originally their relation to a private separate interest; but their relation to an interest to which the affections are *united*, be it either *public* or private. Therefore, in proportion to the concern which the man Jesus Christ felt for the salvation of his people, would his mind be affected in a view of that dreadful wrath there was against them. This is not only conceivable, but is a supposition that is altogether natural. Therefore, that the divine anger, which was exhibited to the view of Christ, was not against him personally but against the church; is a consideration which gives us no reason to suppose that it might not affect him with very deep distress. Christ had no degree of selfishness. His and his church's interest were one. Therefore his good-will to the church would occasion the divine displeasure to be as sensibly felt, as if it had been against him; at least as far as he perceived it, and had a view of it communicated to him.

2. ANOTHER objection against the supposition that the sufferings of Christ could be so extreme as has been represented, is, that the large and extended views of things, which his union to the divine nature would necessarily suppose him to be possessed of, would as

certainly prevent pain of mind in him; as the clear, full light of heaven will prevent it, in the saints, who are spectators of the vengeance actually executed on the final enemies of God.

THIS objection as strongly denies the possibility of Christ's suffering the *least* distress of mind, as the *greatest*. And therefore, supposeth it as unaccountable that he should *weep over Jerusalem, or at the tomb of Lazarus*, as that he should endure the most extreme agonies of mind, in the garden and on the cross. But it is to be remembered that however real and intimate the union was between the human nature of Christ, and the divine; the former was as wholly dependent on God, as any other human nature; and in itself as susceptible of sorrow. Views of things that would be pleasant, or painful, might be communicated, or withholden, according to the mere good pleasure of God. Therefore, no possible union of the *human* nature of Christ, to the *divine*, would render the *former* invulnerable or necessarily unsusceptible of distress.

BUT it is objected, further,

3. THAT the *beauty* of the divine character which shone in that displeasure of God against sinners, which was exhibited, in view, to the mind of Christ; would necessarily occasion the manifestations of it to be pleasing and delightful, instead of painful and distressing.

THIS objection rests on the supposition that it is impossible we should receive pain from any thing which appears beautiful and excellent——That even the contempt of a valuable friend, loses its power to wound, as soon as ever we can believe that we deserve it. But constant experience teaches directly

the reverse to be true. When we are conscious that the displeasure which is exercised against us is undeserved; the character of him who indulges it, must of necessity sink in our esteem. And, no sooner is his character disesteemed, than his displeasure is disregarded. We pay no regard to the contempt of an *enemy;* while that of a *friend* never fails to wound. A consciousness that the displeasure which is exercised against us is righteous; is the very thing that gives it an edge. A sense of God's being offended, of *itself* gives no pain to his enemies; but when we become his friends, and feel that his anger is just and glorious, a sense of his displeasure immediately becomes painful. Were it otherwise, true goodness, upon its taking place in the heart of a sinner, would immediately render it a matter of indifference whether he were the object of divine *favor* or *anger;* and *that* for this obvious reason, that the same infinitely beautiful character of God shines in the *latter* as in the *former*.

It is, therefore, manifest, that the *beauty*, of the divine displeasure, will not occasion the manifestations of it to be less painful to an ingenuous mind; but more so: because this is the very consideration that gives it an edge, and causes it to wound, when it appears to be against an object in which we feel ourselves greatly interested.

These things being so, it is manifest that the human nature of Christ was *susceptible* of sufferings from any, and every quarter from whence they *could* be derived to *innocent men;* and *that* to as much greater a degree as *his* human nature might be superior to that of others.

It is hence manifest,

I. THAT the Father *could* withhold from the human nature of Christ, those views of himself, and those divine communications, which were the chief delight and joy of his heart. This may easily be conceived to be possible: And a denial of the possibility of it, involves the most manifest absurdity. And should it be so that the divine being should withhold from the man Jesus Christ, those manifestations of himself which had, before, been the support and comfort of his life; it cannot otherwise be, than that he should be filled with sorrow and distress. For the greater were the delight and joy which the Saviour had in such divine communications; the more pungent would be his sorrow, upon their being withholden from him: Nor could the certainty of their *future* return, be in any measure sufficient to prevent the pain occasioned by the *present* hidings of God's face.

AND, as this is evidently possible, Christ's own words while in his agony and on the cross; and the language in which his sorrow and lamentation were, before, prophetically described; both concur to prove this in fact to have been the case. "My God, my "God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so "far from helping me, and from the words of my "roaring? How long, O Lord, wilt thou *hide* thy-"self, forever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?(*i*) This is the language of Christ; and this the description of his distress: And the terms are but the natural expressions of a heart filled with sorrow, and now languishing under a withdrawment of those divine communications which had before been its support and life. And when it is plainly a supposable case, that God might so hide himself from the man Jesus, as to occasion in him great sorrow and grief; and the language in which the suffering Saviour of the world

(*i*) Psal. xxii. 1. and lxxxix. 46. Matt. xxvii. 46.

breathes out his sorrows, so evidently concurs with such an idea of the matter, and is so expressive of it; we have abundant reason to suppose that this was in reality the case.

2. God *could* so clothe himself with power, and exhibit his awful anger, in the manifestations he made of himself to the man Jesus Christ, as could not fail of being exceedingly amazing and distressing. *Innocent* creatures, we have already proved, are not unsusceptible of such impressions; Nor is it incompatible with the power of God to give them. The human nature of Christ, however united to the divine, was not unsusceptible of such impressions. And divine power might sustain it under a much greater weight of distress, of this kind, than equals the common, natural powers of man. And as it is far from being unsupposable in the nature of things, that this should have been the case; the sorrow and amazement which seized our blessed Lord, as his death approached; and his strong cries to the Father, if it were possible, that the cup might pass from him; very naturally lead us to suppose that God did put on awful frowns, and display divine anger, in the manifestations which he at that period made of himself to Christ. It would also be no more than natural to suppose, when the circumstances of the case are duly considered, that the views of *himself* which God exhibited to the mind of Christ, correspond with his external treatment of him in his providence.

As all created nature is in itself imperfect, and absolutely dependent on God; it is manifest that, with respect to views of things, and divine communications, God might grant or withhold, just as he saw fit. And should the Father withhold from his son Jesus, in his last hours, those communications which had, before, been his delight and life; and at the same time com-

municate to him such a sense of his righteous and awful displeasure against those whom he came to redeem and save, as he was manifestly capable of receiving; it is exceedingly evident, both from Christ's unalterable love to God, and his invincible attachment to the good of his church, that it could not be otherwise than that he should feel inexpressible amazement and distress.

THERE is not the least need of supposing that the divine displeasure should be against the person of Christ, in order to his being deeply pained by such a view of it as might be made to him. And there is no objection arising from the *perfection* of Christ's character, or from the union of his *human nature* to the *divine* against supposing that here was in fact the source of that pain of mind which he actually endured; that will not be of equal weight against the supposition of a *possibility* that he should endure *any pain of mind* whatever. If the perfect holiness of the *man* Jesus Christ, and the union of his human nature to the divine, would render it naturally impossible that he should receive pain of mind from the considerations already suggested as the ground of his greatest sufferings; they would render it impossible that he should perceive pain of mind in the view of any objects whatever that *could* be presented to him.

As to the propriety of the Saviour's being treated in such a manner as this, when he was *himself* the great sin-offering for the world; we need only observe that the character of God, as the supreme Ruler and Judge, was greatly and especially concerned. It was never designed that the personal obedience and death of Christ here upon earth, notwithstanding his participation of the essence of God, should completely exemplify the whole, and every part of the character of the supreme Governor of the world, to whom atone-

ment was to be made. This could not possibly be done, so long as Christ sustained the character of a servant and acted in a subordinate capacity. But whenever a sacrifice of atonement is offered to God, the character of those *for whom* the offering is made, and of him to whom the sacrifice is offered, are both concerned; and both to be, in some way, clearly expressed and brought to view; in order that the controversy may be clearly understood, and a reconciliation, honorable to the *offended*, and safe to the *offender*, may take place in consequence of the offering. It became the Saviour, therefore, when he was about to offer up *himself* as a sacrifice of atonement for sin, as much as was possible, to put himself in the place of the sinner. And it equally became the Sovereign of the universe to express, in a lively manner, his feelings toward the sinner, and his righteous anger against him, in his treatment of the *sacrifice*. This idea of things is implied in the very institution of sacrifices for sin; and very naturally springs, even from the very appointment of a *substitute* for sinners.

Thus it evidently appears that there is no greater difficulty in accounting for the sufferings of Christ, on the present hypothesis, than on any other supposed ground whatever; nor any absurdity in supposing them to have been inexpressibly great. And what has been before observed respecting God's great end in the creation and government of the world, the original ground and necessity of an atonement, and the actual substitution of Christ in the place of the sinner; all concurs to strengthen and confirm these observations; and prove that the principal weight of Christ's sufferings arose from the deep impressions which were made upon his mind, of the awful anger, the sore displeasure of God against sinners.

CHAP. X.

Shewing in what sense atonement is made for the sins of the whole world.

IT has been the common belief of christians that the death of Christ is, in its own nature, a sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole human race. And the general offers and invitations of the gospel, seem evidently to countenance such an opinion. For if the atonement be not sufficient for the sins of all; it will be difficult to see how the offers of mercy may, consistently, be made to all. And if mercy through an atonement, may be consistently *offered* to all; it will be asked, why may it not, also, be consistently *exercised* toward all; and so *all* be finally saved?

WHETHER the doctrine of universal salvation be a natural and certain consequence of *Christ's satisfaction*, will depend upon the ideas that are entertained of the *sufficiency* of the atonement which is actually made for the sins of men.

IT is therefore to be observed,

I. THAT if by the *sufficiency* of Christ's atonement be meant *such a display of divine righteousness as supersedes all use of punishment* in the divine government; the atonement made by Christ is *not sufficient* for the recovery of all. It is plain that all the valuable ends of punishment were not answered by the sufferings of Christ. For both reason and revelation assure us that the evils brought on mankind, in the present state, are fruits of divine anger. And if universal peace and happiness in the future world, may certainly be inferred from the sufferings of Christ; it will be difficult to give a reason why so many evils

take place in the present. If divine anger has been so abundantly displayed *in the atonement*, as to render all future punishment unnecessary ; it is hard to conceive the reason why so many evils are inflicted on the human race, in the present world. The present sufferings of mankind are an unanswerable proof that, however perfect the atonement be, in the divine view, all the valuable ends of punishment are not actually answered by it. For if it would be inconsistent with full atonement, for God to bring evils on men, in the future world ; it would be equally inconsistent, for him to bring evils on them, in the present. If on account of the atonement, justice demands an exemption from all punishment in the next world ; it equally demands it in this. It is therfore evident, from fact, whatever displays of divine righteousness and anger were made in the sufferings of Christ ; that all the purposes of divine benevolence cannot be answered without a display of the same glorious attributes in a variety of evils brought upon men. And if it may subserve the purposes of divine benevolence to bring evils on men in this world ; we can by no means be certain that it will not subserve the same glorious purposes, to inflict evils on them in the next. If temporary evils may answer valauble ends in the government of God, we cannot be certain that eternal ones may not also. If *evils* are necessary to the fullest display of the divine glory ; we have no sufficient authority from the *atonement* to deny that they always will be necessary. If atonement doth not prevent their *present* necessity and use ; we have no evidence that it will their *future*.

" But" says the objector, " the evils which are " brought on mankind, in the present state, are only " designed to form and raise the subject to higher de- " grees of felicity in the next world : And therefore " are so far from manifesting divine anger, that they

" are but the natural expressions of God's kindness to " the sufferer. Consequently, all the displays of pu- " nitive justice that ever are to be made, were in fact " made in the sufferings of Christ."

BESIDES the express declarations of the word of God which abundantly prove that the evils brought upon the world, are fruits of divine anger ; it is to be observed that this objection goes on a ground which denies the *necessity* of an atonement, or of *any exercise of punitive justice :* And therefore cannot consistently *infer* universal salvation from the atonement. The objection supposeth that the evils which God brings on the human race, are no evidence of divine anger : Consequently, universal salvation cannot be inferred from a *display of divine anger* in the sufferings of Christ. The objection supposes that the evils brought on men are only designed to beget in them a higher relish of happiness ; and therefore, that instead of testifying anger, they express nothing but kindness ; and will certainly issue in higher degrees of felicity.

To the objection, considered in this light, it may be replied,

1. THAT it is far from being evident that *merely a sense of misery*, on the whole, increases happiness. In order to take away the force of the argument for future punishment, which would naturally arise from the evils of the present state ; it must be supposed that pain and misery heighten pleasures ; and are *necessary* to increase the relish of the good which it is supposed is laid up for men in the next world. And, therefore, that there is no evidence, from the evils of the present state, that God is angry ; or that he has not the highest good of every subject really at heart. Thus it is said, it is well known that *losses* sweeten enjoyments ;

pain, pleasure ; and *sickness*, health. But that this argument may have weight, it must be supposed that men may consistently *choose* to lose some of their present *comforts*, in order to sweeten the enjoyment of those that remain—*choose pain* to heighten pleasure ; and *sickness* in order to enjoy health. But would any man, in his senses, make such a choice ? would any man be glad of *pain and sickness*, that he might know the pleasure of health—choose to have his *house* consumed by fire, that he might *enjoy* the escape of his wife and children—or *lose one child*, that he might take greater comfort in the rest ? Common sense, and the very feelings of mankind revolt from the supposition. And yet all this must be supposed, before the sentiment that present evils are no testimonies of divine anger, can be admissible. For if natural evils brought upon us *in this world*, are no testimonies of divine *anger*, there is no evidence that the *favor and friendship* of God will secure us against them, *in the next*. If they are a necessary mean of encreasing felicity in the *present* state ; where is the evidence that they will not be so in the *future ?* And to what a height God may, in his *kindness*, raise them in the next world, it will be impossible for us with any kind of certainty, to determine. The objection before us rests on the supposition that our pleasures will be but feeble, and our enjoyments soon languish ; unless enlivened by a sense of pain. And if so, there can be no evidence that we shall ever arrive at a happier state of existence, than the present ; or be in a situation where the intermixture of good and evil will on the whole, be more favorable to felicity. But if, on the other hand, notwithstanding the *atonement*, divine *anger* be manifested in bringing evils on men in this world ; it can with no certainty be inferred from *this doctrine* that the wisdom of God will not see it to be necessary to bring evils on mankind, in the world to come.

2. But if the objection goes on the supposition that the evils and sufferings of the present state give clearer views of the riches and glory of *divine grace;* and in that way prepare the subject for higher enjoyment; this will imply that these evils are testimonies of divine *anger.* And if a view of divine anger be necessary to the clearest undestanding, and the highest sense, of the nature and excellency of divine grace; how can we be certain that it is not necessary to the highest felicity of the human race, that some manifestations of divine anger should be made to eternity? and therefore that the happiness of the race, on the whole, may not be increased by means of the destruction of some part of it? At least so much is evident, that there is no ground on which the objection before us can have weight, that will imply the least absurdity in the doctrine of eternal punishment. Nor is there any thing in the atonement more difficult to reconcile to *future* manifestations of divine anger, than to those which are in fact made in the *present* world.

II. If by the *sufficiency* of Christ's atonement, be meant such a manifestation of divine displeasure against the wickedness of men, as is enough to convince every candid spectator, that the disposition of the divine mind is perfectly conformable to the true spirit of God's written law; it may be truly said that there is sufficient atonement made for the sins of the whole world. It was apparently, the design of God that we should *infer*, from the sufferings of Christ, the awful effects of divine anger, should it fall with its full weight upon us. Therefore, the Saviour, alluding to his own sufferings, says, "For if they do these things in *a* "*green tree*, what shall be done in the dry?"* We cannot rationally suppose that Christ would have reasoned in this manner, unless his own sufferings had

* Luke xxiii. 31.

been a *specimen* of divine anger, from whence very amazing effects, should it fall immediately upon us, might be inferred.

When we consider the infinite dignity of the character of Christ, the sufferings which he endured, in the place which he sustained, give us as lively apprehensions of the righteous and inexorable anger of God against sinners, as all the awful threatenings of the law can possibly excite in us. And, every one who receives the testimony of Christ, and truly gives in to the import of his death, thereby sets to his seal that God is true: Not only that the law itself is right; but that the government of God is perfectly conformable to the true spirit of it.

Here there is a foundation laid, sufficiently broad, for the general invitations of the gospel; and for that joyful proclamation, that whoever will, may come and take of the waters of life freely. No glass had ever yet been held up before men, in which the divine wrath might be so clearly seen: Nor any thing ever exhibited, in the divine government, which would raise the ideas of it, in creatures, to such a height; or enable them to form so just an estimate of it.

Here the direct end of atonement is answered; and such a manifestation made of divine righteousness, as prepared the way for a *consistent* exercise of mercy. Now, God would not appear to give up his law, even though he pardoned the sinner: Or, to exhibit a disposition diverse from that which he expressed in the law. But, *merely* from the exhibition which was made of divine wrath in the sufferings of Christ, the pardon, even of one sinner could, with no certainty be inferred:—Unless it might be inferred from the highest evidences of the reality of God's displeasure against us, that *therefore* he would, certainly *not pun-*

ish, but *pardon* us. Upon atonement being made, the situation and circumstances are such, that the great Governor of the world may consistently bestow, or withhold mercy, just as shall tend most effectually to answer the general purposes of divine goodness. Whereas, had there been no atonement, there would have been the highest inconsistency in the bestowment of pardon, even on one sinner. Now, the divine benevolence might express itself in having mercy on whom it would have mercy, and whom it would, hardening; just as it would contribute to the greatest felicity of the created system: While, without an atonement, benevolence itself could never have urged, or even admitted, the pardon of one sinner.

THE *atonement*, therefore, expresseth a benevolence which has, for its object, the highest good of the creation:—that very character of God which is expressed in the free and general invitations of the gospel. From *the atonement*, therefore, the universal salvation of sinners cannot, with the least appearance of reason, be inferred; unless it be first made further evident, that the ends of the truest and most perfect benevolence cannot otherwise be completely answered: which, it is presumed cannot be done. *This doctrine*, consequently, never originated the opinion that sinners of mankind would be universally saved: But it must have arisen from some other quarter.

IT being thus manifest that the doctrine of atonement is far from being sufficient to support the lately prevailing sentiment respecting universal salvation, we may proceed to mention some things which give reason to suppose that *the very ends of the atonement* may be more perfectly answered without the universal salvation of sinners, than by it: And, that the eternal destruction of some part of the human race,

will bestow a lustre on *this doctrine*, which it would want without it.

It may, first, be observed, in general, that whatever illustrates the dignity and glory of the character of Christ, does, of course, give import and significancy to the atonement. The higher the dignity and excellence of Christ's character rise, in the view of creatures; the more important will his sufferings and death naturally appear. The greater import, also, there appears to be, in the sufferings of the Saviour; the deeper will the impressions be, on the minds of creatures, of the awful anger of God against sinners. By how much the higher ideas of divine anger against sin, rise in the creature; by so much the more clear and lively will be the sense and view of the freedom and richness of sovereign *grace:* which will proportionably, contribute to the greater felicity of the subjects of it. So that it appears to be of great importance, even to the very ends of the atonement itself, that the dignity of Christ's character should be set in the clearest point of view.

Hence it is that the human race are, all, given into the hand of Christ, for him to dispose of forever: As appears from his being appointed the judge of the world. And, that the atonement may receive additional import from the eternal destruction of sinners, and the glory of Christ's character be greatly illustrated by the vengeance which he takes upon his enemies, is evident from the following considerations, viz.

1. The dignity and glory of a Conqueror, appear as illustrious in the destruction of his enemies, as in the deliverance of his friends: And regards to the public good, are as strongly painted in the evils which are inflicted on the opposers of it, as in the protection

which is offered to its friends. Therefore, the Father is represented as saying to Christ, in consequence of his having finished the work of redemption, "Ask of "me, and I will give the heathen for thine inherit- "ance, and the uttermost parts of the earth, for thy "possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of "iron, *thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's* "*vessel.*"* In this way is Christ to triumph over his enemies. This is to be a part of his reward for his sufferings. And, a promise of such a triumph would never have been made to him, unless it would contribute to his greater glory, and render his merit more conspicuous. And, if the true merit and glory of Christ's character may be illustrated in this way; this would naturally lead us to expect that his tender love to his church and his infinite aversion from the enemies of his cause and kingdom will be exhibited in awful vengeance on impenitent sinners, at the day of judgment.

2. CHRIST'S executing vengeance at the day of judgment, will naturally express a higher degree of respect to the moral law, than could have appeared without it. The real merit of Christ, in character of mediator, consisteth solely in his regards to the moral law, or to that character of Jehovah which is expressed in it. Had not his obedience and death, while upon earth, flowed from this principle, it would have been of no worth in the sight of God. But because he *loved righteousness*, and *hated iniquity*, *therefore* God, his God hath anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows.† Had he not expressed the highest sense of the excellency of the divine law, his obedience and death would not have been the least ground for mercy to sinners.

* Psalms ii. 8, 9. † Psalms xlv. 7.

But while he was upon earth, neither in his life, nor in his death, had Christ *advantage* to express, in full perfection, his infinite love to the law of God. For *this* he needed to sustain a different character from that which he appeared in while on earth ; and to be in a different station. While in the world, he held the station of a servant ; and appeared, and acted, in no other capacity. *Then* he expressed the most perfect respect and love for the divine law, which his situation and character would admit of being expressed. He acted his part in perfection here upon earth. His whole life was a scene of the most perfect and spotless obedience ; and that in the midst of the greatest opposition and trials. And further to discover his entire approbation of the divine law, and the high estimation in which he held that glorious character of Jehovah which appears in it ; the Saviour himself submitted to death, and voluntarily became a curse. But the part which he had to act for God, and for his glory and honor as the great lawgiver and judge, was not yet come to an end. Therefore was it of importance that he should be set at the head of the universe ; be appointed judge of quick and dead ; and pass the solemn decisive sentence, which would fix the fate of creatures to eternity. In this high and exalted station, the regards of the divine mediator to the moral law, his love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, are expressed in ways in which he had no advantage to discover them, while he was upon earth ; and glow in colors in which they never could before appear. Before, he manifested love enough to the law of God, as a *servant*, to obey it even unto death : Now, as a *King* and *Judge*, to administer government according to the strict tenor of it : dispensing rewards and punishments, and actually inflicting the death which the law threatens. As a servant, he loved it to a degree which engaged him to endure the curse ; as a King, to inflict it. Before, it appeared that he loved sinners well

enough to die for them; now, that he loves God well enough eternally to damn them.

FROM his station, therefore, as King and Judge, the Mediator is viewed in a different light from what he could appear in before; and clearer discoveries are made of his real and transcendently excellent character. Now his love to the divine law puts on a different form from any in which it had before been ever seen. And this act of awful justice, in dooming impenitent sinners to eternal death, gives an import, a significancy, to the sufferings of Christ, which creatures never could have apprehended without it; giving a solemn majesty to his death, which will enable his people, forever, more highly to prize it.

HERE we see an obvious reason why the *Mediator* should be appointed the judge of the world. This exalted station, the holy scriptures teach us, was given him in reward for his sufferings, for his obedience unto death. And, in this last solemn act, before he gives up the kingdom into the hand of the Father, he hath advantage to exhibit, in more strong and glorious colors than could ever before appear, the perfect union and harmony, in himself and in his arduous work, of *mercy* and *truth*, and of *righteousness* and *peace*. *These* not only have harmonized and united in all the doctrines which he taught, and the work which he accomplished, on earth; but they meet, and kiss each other in the solemn sentence of his lips, "Come, ye "blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared "for you, from the foundation of the world." And, "depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for "the devil and his angels."

3. THE greater respect is manifested to the law of God, by such a person as *Christ who died for sinners;*

the more evident will be, both the evil of sin, and the necessity and import of the atonement.

ALL the new honors reflected upon the divine law, by the mediator, necessarily increase and heighten the ideas of the evil of sin. And, by how much the more the evil and malignity of sin are made manifest; by so much the more necessary will the atonement appear: and the significancy and importance of it be proportionably increased, in the estimation of creatures. And yet, without this last and solemn act of judgment, it is exceedingly manifest that the high estimation in which the divine law is held by the divine Redeemer, could never be so clearly discovered, or so sensibly apprehended by creatures; even, though he *died* to magnify and make it honorable. The saints, therefore would forever be destitute of that discovery of righteousness, in the mediator, which, above every thing else, crowns those regards of his, to the law of God, which he expressed in dying upon the cross.

BUT, when the regard of Christ, to the divine law, is seen from the seat of judgment, and expressed in a sentence of everlasting punishment upon impenitent sinners; the saints will then see, in a more clear light than they ever could before, how great a thing it was for *Christ* to die for *sinners;* and himself, become a *curse* for them, that they might be the *righteousness of God* in him. By these means, therefore, the divine purity and hatred of iniquity will be greatly heightened to the views of creatures; and, clearer apprehensions, consequently, be had of the nature, the extent, and the glory of divine, sovereign mercies: All which, it is easy to see, contribute to a vast enlargement of the powers and happiness of those who are saved by Christ.

BUT, on the other hand, should it be that the sentence of the law is, in no instance executed, at the last day; it is exceedingly manifest that one glorious testimony of Christ's respect to the divine law will be wanting: And, therefore, one evidence, of the necessity and importance of his death. And, in proportion as the evidence of all these is defective, the ideas of divine *grace* must be diminished; and the glory of the whole gospel fade away.

THESE observations make it manifest that the *atonement*, notwithstanding its entire sufficiency and fullness, is far from implying, either a necessity, or certainty, of the salvation of the whole human race: So far from it that, on the other hand, both the necessity and import of the atonement may be greatly illustrated by the eternal destruction of impenitent sinners. And if the preceding observations are just, the true nature of atonement could never be seen, nor properly understood, nor the real worth of it be suitably estimated, were the penalty of the law, in no instance, executed in its full extent upon transgressors.

AND as the sense we have of divine *grace* must necessarily be in proportion to the ideas we entertain of God's hatred of iniquity; it seems no more than rational to suppose that, in order to preserve and heighten a sense of grace, in those who are saved from among men; there will be *perpetual* displays of divine anger, on vessels of wrath. And to see this vengeance executed by *him who himself became a curse for his people*, will greatly exalt his character, and give a language, a significancy, to his death, which was never before so clearly understood.

CONCLUSION.

IT may be of advantage before we dismiss the subject, to turn our attention, for a little while, to some of the natural consequences of a *denial* of the doctrine of atonement; or of the supposition that the *mere persevering obedience of Christ*, was all that was necessary to open a way for mercy to sinners. These two opinions will probably be found, on careful enquiry, to amount to one and the same thing: At least, not to be materially different in their consequences. They both deny any real necessity, arising either from the moral character of God, or from any other consideration, of his executing any punishments; or, when *sin had taken place*, of displaying in its natural fruits, that displeasure which the penalties of the law would naturally suggest.

On these sentiments it may be observed,

1. That if it be unnecessary to the glory of the divine character, and the good of God's moral government, that he should *express his displeasure against sin*, when it had actually taken place, by inflicting *natural evil*; it was of course unnecessary that God should ever *threaten* the sinner with natural evil. Where the general good doth not require punishments to be inflicted, it doth not require that they should be threatened. So also in cases where benevolence will not express displeasure, it will not threaten creatures with it. It discovers capriciousness and want of wisdom, to annex penalties to laws, which never need be executed—to express displeasure *in words*, in cases wherein it doth not *in fact* exist. On supposition, therefore, that God's displeasure against sinners never need be expressed *in natural evils*; it is evident that the moral law, abounding as it does with awful threatenings,

doth not express the true and real character of God; but one infinitely the reverse; exhibiting *in words*, anger which hath no *existence* in the divine mind, and dressing the great governor of the world in vengeance, while anger is not in him. Nothing, therefore, can more directly subvert the first principles of divine revelation, than the supposition that it is unnecessary to the glory of the divine character, that God should express, in natural evil, his displeasure against sin. That opinion which supposeth that sin might have been forgiven without atonement, clothes the divine Being in a character exceedingly diverse from that in which he appears in the moral law; and represents him as being possessed of a *goodness* of an exceedingly different nature from that which the moral law naturally exhibits. Therefore, for Christ to come, and magnify *this law* and do it honor; when it exhibits a character, in God, so infinitely diverse from that which would certainly have saved sinners, even though Christ had never appeared on earth; would be very far from being pleasing to the *Father:* And never, in *his* view, could have merited that high station to which he is now exalted.

These consequences necessarily flow from a denial of the necessity of an atonement; if it be granted that the moral law, as promulgated in the sacred scriptures, speaks the mind and will of God. If the divine will, the feelings of the divine mind, perfectly correspond with the written law; it is inconceivable that God's anger against sinners should not be expressed, in his moral government, by natural evil. And when we consider the supremacy and mighty power of God, to deny the need of natural evil in order truly to express the character of God, when sin hath actually taken place; is the same as to deny that there are any feelings in the divine mind, which, in their natural consequences and expressions would bring evil on sinners.

For if such feelings exist in the divine mind, they cannot be known otherwise than by being *expressed in God's works.* And if it is God's great end to make himself known, and in works exhibit his true character to the views of his creatures; there is no more reason to suppose that the scenes of divine government will be destitute of the fruits of this part of the character of God, than of those which directly express his approbation of virtue.

The supposition, therefore, that atonement is not necessary to the exercise of mercy toward sinners, evidently implies that the written law doth not, in fact, speak the very mind and will of God: But that the law itself, at furthest, intimates no more than that the sinner *who persists in wickedness* shall fall under the divine anger. But that persevering wickedness and impenitency, and these only, shall subject us to the anger of God, is so far from being the language of the divine law, that it *curseth* every one that *continueth not in all things* written in the book of the law to *do them.* If, therefore, nothing but persevering wickedness so incurs the divine anger as to expose to natural evil; nothing can be more certain than that the written law doth not indeed truly express the will of God. This must be true, unless the plain and natural language of the law, is that *only certain, atrocious sins* shall be punished. And if the consequences of a denial of the necessity of atonement, which have already been mentioned, be admitted to stand until *this* can be found to be the language of God's written law; they will not suddenly be subverted.

He that can put such a construction on the *moral law* as leaves room for the escape of sinners of certain denominations and characters; with an equal degree of dexterity in criticism and construction, will soon discover that sinners of *every denomination* may, *even by*

law, be exempted from punishment: And therefore enjoy, for a little while, the poor consolation of believing that anger is not in God, and that there are no punishments for the wicked.

2. If it be unnecessary to the glory of the divine government, that God's anger against sinners should be *expressed* in bringing natural evil; it is equally unnecessary that any such displeasure as would, in its natural fruits and operation, bring evil on sinners, should ever *have existence* in the divine mind. The supposition that divine anger need not be exercised and expressed, implies that it is of no use; and therefore not an excellency in God: And consequently can have no existence in him.

Thus the opinion that there is no necessity for God's expressing his anger against sinners, by bringing natural evils upon them; not only cuts off the penalties of the law, but exhibits the divine character itself in a point of light exceedingly diverse from that which the moral law naturally expresseth. And the denial of any necessity of atonement, in order to a consistent exercise of pardon and mercy; plainly amounts to a denial of the necessity of punishments, under the divine government; or of any necessity arising from the divine perfection, that God should ever express displeasure by inflicting natural evil.

Nearly the same consequences are involved in the opinion that the *persevering obedience of Christ* was all that was necessary in order to open a way for mercy to sinners. For unless this persevering obedience expressed divine anger against sinners; it is manifest that there is no necessity that God should either exercise, or express anger: And therefore, all the consequences which flow from a denial of the *ne-*

cessity of atonement, flow equally from this construction of the *nature* of it.

But to say that Christ's *obedience* expressed divine anger against sinners, is the same as to say that all that anger which exists in the divine mind, against them, may be expressed without natural evil—without punishments. This is evident; because it is implied in the supposition before us, that Christ expressed and acted out the character of God;—that the disposition of the divine mind was perfectly delineated in Christ, and in his obedience. And if the whole disposition of the divine mind toward sinners, may be expressed without natural evil, without punishment; it is plain that no punishment is ever to be expected or feared: And *that* for this obvious reason, that there is in fact no disposition in the divine mind actually to punish offenders; or to bring natural evil upon them.

Further; to say that God expresseth displeasure against sinners by *rewarding the obedience of Christ with a pardon to sinners;* is still saying that there is no anger in God, but what may be properly and fully expressed by bestowing *rewards.* It would be absurd to suppose that the rewards which a master, or a parent, bestows upon an obedient servant, or child, express displeasure against the rest of the family. And if such be all the anger that ever exists in the head of the family; neither children, nor servants, need ever be afraid of punishment. So if all the displeasure which exists in the divine mind against sinners, may be expressed in rewarding the obedience of Christ; it is apparent that there is no displeasure which need ever be expressed in inflicting punishment.

Should it be urged that both the Father and the Son expressed displeasure against sinners, by united-

ly acting against the *cause of sin;* and that this is all the way in which it is necessary the divine anger should appear; the consequence would still be that there is no disposition in the divine mind to punish offenders. Because this implies that God may express all the displeasure which he really hath against sinners, by acting in such a manner, in his providence, *for* the cause of righteousness, and *against* that of iniquity, as would render all punishment unnecessary.

THE denial of any *necessity* of atonement, and every construction of the *nature* of it which renders punishments unnecessary; are equally subversive of the moral law. Every explanation of the nature of atonement which implies it to be unnecessary that God should express anger against sinners by *natural evils;* invests the divine Being with a character very different from that which the moral law naturally expresses. All such ideas, either of the necessity or nature of atonement, suppose that there is nothing in the moral law which would naturally and necessarily forbid an expectation of pardon, upon repentance, even though Christ had never come into the world: And therefore, that the penalties of the law do not, in words, express any such displeasure against sinners, as, in its natural operation and fruits, would bring the punishments spoken of in the law, upon them. Such ideas of atonement imply that, whatever disapprobation may exist in the divine mind, of the characters of sinners; still it is of such a nature that it may all be expressed without natural evil: Or, at least, that we could not have inferred from the clearest view we could have had of it, that God would ever punish sinners: even had Christ never come into the world and died.

THE whole controversy respecting atonement, therefore, turns upon the *explanation* of the moral

law; and probably arises from different constructions put upon it. If the written law is expressive of an anger in God against sinners, which, in its natural operation would bring eternal punishment upon them; it is obvious that the spirit of the law cannot be preserved in government, unless this anger be, in some sensible way, exhibited to the views of creatures: and consequently, that it would be inconsistent with the character of God to pardon sinners without an atonement; and such an one as should exhibit this anger; and in which it should appear to burn against sinners.

But on the other hand, if God may consistently pardon sinners without an atonement; or without exhibiting an anger which would bring eternal destruction upon sinners, should it fall immediately upon them; it is obvious, either that the law exhibits no such character, in the great Governor of the world, as would naturally lead us to expect such an event; or that the true character of God is not fairly delineated in the moral law. For that the law should threaten eternal death to every transgressor, and at the same time fairly and faithfully delineate the moral character of God; and yet that God should pardon the sinner without any atonement; is a manifest absurdity. The supposition, therefore, that God may consistently pardon, without any atonement, either wholly subverts the divine law, or gives a view of it totally different from that which is naturally exhibited in an atonement.

Here, then, according to the ideas of those who deny the atonement, are the true feelings of genuine, gracious repentance: at least it involves, an apprehension that it would be inconsistent with the very nature, and with every idea of *goodness*, for God to shut us out from his favor. From any repentance toward

God, which involves those ideas of the divine character, it is easy to see the human heart is not naturally very averse. Yea, to define any material change, with respect to its views of the divine character, which takes place in the human heart, in repentance; will, on this hypothesis, be utterly impracticable. Surely no such change can be conceived as renders, divine, supernatural influences, in any measure necessary. We need not, therefore, be surprised to hear those who deny the necessity of atonement, renounce every idea of divine supernatural operation, in the conversion of sinners.

And with what appearance of consistency, gentlemen who entertain such ideas respecting atonement, can urge that this is a doctrine which subverts the very notion of *grace* in the pardon of sinners; is hard to be conceived. For, with such, it is a fundamental maxim that it would be inconsistent with *goodness* to deny pardon to penitents. On this foundation the superstructure of their whole system is built. And what *grace* there can be in conferring pardon, in cases wherein it would be *unjust and cruel* to withhold it, cannot possibly be imagined. Little reason have those who entertain such sentiments, to exclaim against the advocates of atonement, as denying the doctrines of *free grace* in the salvation of sinners.

Thus manifest is it, that the denial of atonement makes a total change in the aspect, not only of the moral law, but also of the whole christian system. It exhibits both the divine character itself, the doctrines of Christ and his Apostles, and the terms on which the sinner may be pardoned and saved, in a light infinitely diverse from that in which they all appear *in the atonement of Christ.*

And now it must be left with the candid, intelligent reader, to judge for himself; faithfully comparing what is here offered with the *unerring oracles of God. These* are the only standard of truth; and by *these* must every doctrine be tried. Every sentiment, every scheme of doctrine that will not bear this test, however cherished, or by whatever great name it be authorised, will sooner or later fall to the ground. While, on the other hand, every system, and every sentiment that is found here, however unpopular, however exploded by the great and the wise, among men; will infalliby stand, and shine, and brighten forever and ever.

And the whole must be left with HIM who, *himself*, made atonement for the sins of the world; for him to use, and to dispose of, as in infinite wisdom, he shall see will be for the best. With *Him* the cause of *truth* may be confided: in *his* hand it is infinitely safe. May the time be hastened when the darkness shall be dispelled, and the light shall shine: when *his* truth, such as it is, shall be known and be confessed, from one end of the earth even unto the other; and the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. AMEN.

APPENDIX.

CONTAINING A VIEW OF CONSEQUENCES, RESULTING FROM A DENIAL OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

THE doctrines of christianity are so connected together, and many of them so evidently imply each other, that a denial of one, subverts the foundation of many others. This is more obviously the case respecting *that* of the Divinity of Christ, than almost any other doctrine. As the christian system is built on Christ, his character is so interwoven with the whole, that the nature and consistency of it can be comprehended, no further than his true and real character is understood. All evangelical doctrines derive their complexion from the character of Christ, their Author:—And, must necessarily admit and *require* very different constructions, according to the sentiments, which are to be entertained respecting the real Divinity of his person. *This is remarkably absurd.*

WE often derive advantage from a view of consequences naturally flowing from opinions proposed to us. *Consequences* afford one rule for trying the strength and justness of principles from which they result. The consequences, which naturally flow from opinions, and the influence these opinions necessarily have on others, serve, many times, to shew their consistency, or the reverse. In this view of the subject, it may be useful to trace some of the consequences, which naturally flow from a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

In the preceding *Examination of the Scripture Doctrine of Atonement, the true and real Divinity of Jesus Christ* was taken as a given point; and on this ground was the inquiry into the nature of the atonement he made for sin. As the truth of this doctrine is much more freely and openly called in question, than it was when the Treatise was first published; it is thought that, in aid of this important subject, a view of some of the consequences, naturally resulting from a denial of the real and essential Divinity of Christ, may now, with propriety, be added.

I. If Christ be not truly a divine person—God as well as man, it must be, that there is no atonement made for the sins of men; and, of course, if any sinners of mankind are pardoned and saved, they are saved without regard to any atonement made for them.

If the death of Christ were not an atonement for sin, none has been made. By *atonement* is here meant *that* which magnifies the broken law of God, and does it the same honor, which would have been done by the execution of its penalty whenever it be incurred. The only natural and ordinary way to magnify and honor a broken law, is to execute its penalty on the offender. Laws, which are not executed, will, neither be of force, nor command respect. If the sinner be forgiven without such a testimony of divine displeasure against him, as honors the law of God, and establishes its authority to the same degree, that the execution of its penalty would have done; it would seem to diminish the respectability, both of the law, and of the Lawgiver; and, naturally tend to take away the fear of offending the holy God. Whenever, and in whatever way, the displeasure of God against the sinner be as fully and sensibly expressed, to the view of creatures, as it would have been by the execution of the penalty of the law itself upon him, *atonement* is made

for his sins, and the ends of punishment are answered. By *atonement*, therefore, we mean a clear and visible manifestation of that righteous anger, which really exists in the divine mind against the sinner, *without the offender's being subjected to personal punishment.*

If Jesus Christ be *but a creature*—if he be not, truly and really, a *divine person;* no atonement, in this sense of the term, is made for sin:—For aught we can see, it might have been forgiven, with as little injury to the character and respectability of the law of God, if he had never came into the world. If Christ be but a mere man, or a mere creature, in whatever sense it may be supposed he died for sinners, there is nothing, in his death, to exhibit the character of the Great Governor of the world in any measure in the light, in which the threatenings of his holy law represent it. No temporary sufferings of a mere creature could exhibit a displeasure in Him, who inflicted them, to be compared with that, which would necessarily appear in the execution of the threatened penalty on a sinner. For the sinner, therefore, to have been forgiven, even however much out of respect to Christ, would seem necessarily to cast reproach on the law of God, and beget an opinion, that so high a degree of displeasure, as its penalties import, never did, in fact, exist, in the divine mind.

If, on the other hand, Christ is really a divine person—in such a sense the Son of God, that he partakes of the very nature and essence of the Godhead—If a person of *such dignity* gave his life a ransom for sinners, bearing their sins in his own body on the tree; the character of that glorious Judge and Avenger, who laid on him the iniquities of us all, must appear in a light exceedingly different from what it would or could have done, had the sinner been forgiven out of

any supposeable respect to Christ, if he were but a mere creature.—Yea, the very sufferings of Christ must, in this case, have exhibited the character of God in an unspeakably different light, from what the sufferings of any mere creature could have done. That nothing short of the deep humiliation and sacrifice of a Son so infinitely near and dear to him, would prevail on the Eternal Father to remit, in any instance, the penalty of the law; must manifest, in God, the highest conceivable respect to his holy law: It shews, that a law, guarded by such penalties as his is, could, in no other way, receive sufficient honor, if sinners were forgiven. If the Saviour, who was sacrificed for his people, is, in this full and high sense, the Son of God; the sacrifice shews as high a respect to the moral law, as would have appeared in the execution of the penalty on him, for whom the sacrifice was made. For creatures to see, that *without such a sacrifice*, God will not permit the transgressor to go unpunished, will naturally, excite, in them, as great a fear of offending, as it can be supposed the threatenings of the law are capable of exciting.

In estimating the displeasure, which is ever manifested in sufferings, we naturally take into view the character of the patient, as well as the quantity of sufferings themselves. We read greater displeasure in the pains and sufferings inflicted on a person of high and exalted character, than in the same degrees of natural evil laid on one of much lower character and worth. And, if it be just, that we should, in this way, estimate the displeasure of the holy God in evils, which he inflicts; it must be admitted, on the principle that Christ is truly a divine person, that, in his humiliation, sufferings and death, there is as full and visible a discovery of divine anger, as is made in all the awful threatenings and penalties of the law of God. Consequently, if that Jesus, who died on the

cross, was truly God as well as man, there is an *atonement* made for sin, in the sense in which it is urged to be necessary for the pardon of a sinner. If, on the other hand, this Jesus be but a mere creature, there is no atonement, agreeable to the definition of the term, before given, made for the sins of men.

HERE, then, it may not be improper to note several consequences, which will result from the pardon of sin without any atonement. And,

1. IF Christ have not made an atonement for sin, by his suffering and death, it cannot be on account of any *righteousness of his*, that penitent sinners are pardoned and saved. Many things in the sacred Scriptures have induced a general belief, in christians, that the righteousness of Christ is the great and only *consideration*, on which pardon and eternal life are ever bestowed on a sinner. Christians are said to be justified *by the blood of Christ*—to be reconciled to God *by the death of his Son*, Rom. v. 9, 10. *The righteousness of the law* is said to be fulfilled in them, Rom. viii. 4. And, God is said to *impute righteousness without works* to believers, Rom. iv. 5, 6. Christ is said to be *made righteousness* as well as sanctification and redemption to his people, 1 Cor. i. 30. And the apostle says, God made Christ to be *sin* for believers, that they might be made the *righteousness* of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. Christ is, also, said to be *the Lord* his people's *righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. And their language is, *In the Lord have we righteousness*, Isa. xlv. 24. Accordingly, Paul wished to be found in Christ, not having on his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the *righteousness* which is of God by faith, Philip. iii. 9.

THE term *righteousness*, relates to a rule, or law, by which the moral actions and characters of creatures

are to be tried and decided.—It plainly supposes such a rule to exist. The *moral law*, as revealed in the holy Scriptures, is the only rule by which the actions of men are to be tried; and, by which their characters are to be decided, either as *righteous*, or the reverse. So, also, the terms *justify* and *justification* relate to *law*, and imply a rule, agreeably to which persons are, or may be acquitted, from any guilt charged upon them. The foregoing passages must, therefore, imply, that sinners, who are pardoned and saved by Christ, are acquitted from condemnation not without that righteousness, which the moral law requires, and which, in the eye of law, would be sufficient to justify and acquit them from every charge, which could reasonably be brought against them.

It is true, that, in the nature of things, it is supposeable, an acquittal should be granted a criminal, without any regard to *law*, or any *righteousness* of the law; though it might be difficult, for us, to discern the consistency of it with the character of a *righteous* judge. But should the holy God, in this way, acquit one, who is a sinner, from condemnation; it could not easily be perceived how, with propriety, it could be said, that *the righteousness of the law is fulfilled* in him.—Nor can we see any way, in which *this righteousness* is, or can be fulfilled in a sinner, unless there be in the character, and work of Christ, a proper and reasonable ground for God to treat sinners *who believe in him* as righteous persons; and, for bestowing on them the benefits of righteousness. There is no way, in which we can conceive the righteousness of the law to be fulfilled, in a moral creature, otherwise than by his, either perfectly obeying it, or suffering its penalty—or, by the righteousness and sufferings of another, to whom he stands in such a relation, that his vicarious sufferings and righteousness answer the same valuable ends of government, as would have been answer-

ed, either by his own perfect personal obedience, or in defect of that, his suffering the penalty of transgression. But, unless Christ is a person of such high and infinite dignity, that *his* subjecting himself to the law, and bearing the sins of his people in his own body on the tree, does the same honor to the divine law, and as entirely establishes the authority, and honors the government of God, as would have been done by the execution of the penalty on the transgressor; it will not easily be seen, how his people are said to be *justified* and *redeemed by his blood*:—Nor, unless believers in Christ derive from him the benefits of *righteousness*, and *that* in a way as truly honorable to the just God and his righteous government, as though they, themselves had fulfilled it, do we see how *righteousness* can be said to be reckoned or imputed to them—how Christ is made *righteousness* to them—or how he is *their righteousness*. To suppose the terms *justify*, *justification*, *righteousness*, as they are used, in the holy Scriptures, in reference to believers, have no relation to *law*—the rule by which the actions and characters of men are estimated; must imply, that they are used in a sense very foreign from their original import; and, in a manner, which conveys, neither instruction, nor idea to us.

If it be not on account of that righteousness of Christ, which consisted in his perfect obedience, and his becoming a curse, that believers are pardoned and justified; no respect is had to the law, or to its righteousness that we can see, in the provision, which is made for the salvation of sinners, either one way or another. If there be no atonement for sin, (as there is not, if Christ be not a divine person,) no regard is had to law, or to any righteousness of the law, in the bestowment of pardons on offenders. If this be the way in which pardons are conferred, no *righteousness* either is, or need be imputed to the subjects—

Christ is not *their righteousness*; nor is he, nor need he be *made righteousness* to them. If it be, that pardons are thus absolutely bestowed on any of our guilty race, there might have been all the same grounds, for aught we can see, for the salvation of sinners, as those on which it is actually bestowed, had Christ never came into the world and died:—The law, as a rule by which, and according to the spirit of which, moral creatures are to be, either acquitted, or condemned, is, as to them, perfectly set aside.

But it may be said, that sinners are pardoned and saved *on their repentance and return to obedience*; and, therefore, though the doctrine of the Divinity and atonement of Christ be given up, it cannot, with propriety be said, that no regard is had to the honor and righteousness of the law, in their pardon and salvation—That, sufficient honor is done, and respect paid to it, when the offender acknowledges its righteousness, condemns himself for transgressing, and returns to obedience. In reply to this, it is to be observed, that, if any regard be had, in this case, to *any righteousness whatever*, it must be to the sinner's own--the righteousness of his *repentance and return to obedience*. That *this* should be considered, either as the righteousness of the law, or doing honor to it, must imply, that the law condemns sinners only on condition of their *persisting and dying in impenitence*. On no other construction of the law of God than this, can the sinner's repentance and return to obedience be considered, either as doing any sufficient honor to the law, or fulfilling its righteousness. That sinners of mankind are saved, and restored to the favor of God on account of any *personal righteousness* ever found in them, naturally leads to *this construction* of that holy law of God, which curseth every one, who does not continue in *all things* written in the book of it, to do them. If, on the other hand, the holy law of God makes perfect,

sinless holiness the only condition of our inheriting his favor; it must be undeniable, that no righteousness of *a sinner* can be the ground of his being saved from the execution of that curse, which he has incurred:—For the righteousness of a *sinner*, be it ever so perfect in its kind, can be the righteousness of no law, but such an one, as is satisfied and sufficiently honored by *his* repentance, and consequently, of none, but what makes persevering, final impenitence, the only ground of condemnation to punishment.

But if the import of that moral law, under which God has placed us, be no other, than that they, who persist in disobedience, and die in impenitence, shall suffer its curse; it is a clear case, that the repenting, returning sinner has, neither incurred, nor deserves it. He does not come within that description, which alone subjects to the curse. There can be no occasion, therefore, for any atonement to be made for him, or for any other righteousness than his own, to open a way for him to the favor of God. We observe,

II. That, if sinners are pardoned and saved any otherwise than through the atonement and righteousness of Christ, there will be no evidence, that their salvation is *by grace*.

That the salvation of sinners is wholly *by grace* is a doctrine most clearly and fully taught in the gospel. It is so expressly asserted, on a great variety of occasions, in the New Testament, as to render it unnecessary to recite any particular passage. Though all, who profess to believe the gospel, will acknowledge, that the salvation of sinners must be *by grace;* many, however, entertain very different ideas of the nature and import of that grace, by which sinners are saved. It will be necessary, therefore, to ascertain, if we can, the Scriptural idea of the term, when it is used to ex-

press the greatness of divine goodness and mercy, which are exercised in the salvation of sinners.

HERE, then, it is to be observed, that the term *grace*, when it is used in the holy Scriptures, to express that divine love and goodness, which are exercised in pardoning and saving sinners, does not mean the bestowment of favor and blessings *exceeding any proper merit in the object, or the worth of any service performed; but, it means favor to the ill-deserving—blessings and good conferred on such as merit nothing but evil at the hand of God.* It is essential to the Scriptural ideas of *grace*, that the object of favor and blessings, deserves curses and evil.—Only such as deserve the wrath and curse of God, can be the objects of God's *saving mercy and grace.*

IN proof of this, it is to be observed, that the apostle, treating on the doctrine of our justification by faith, tells us, Rom. iv. 4, 5. "Now to him that "worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of "debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth "on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is count-"ed for righteousness." And again further, verse 16, still treating on the same subject, he observes, "Therefore it is by faith, that it might be by grace." When there is no defect of obedience, the reward is there said to be of *debt.* Thus it is to the holy angels, who never sinned. And, thus it would have been to our first parents, had they never transgressed. A reward bestowed agreeably to a covenant or promise, for services and obedience, however far it may exceed the worth and value of the service, is yet, in the language and estimation of scripture, of *debt.* But a reward *by grace* invariably means *favor shewed to the ungodly*—blessings and good bestowed on those, who deserve nothing but evil at the hand of God. So, also, if the virtue and obedience of a *sinner*, be *the*

consideration on which he is received into the favor of God, and treated as righteous; his justification is evidently not by *grace*, but the reverse. For the apostle, speaking of the way in which Abraham was justified, says that, if it were by works, *he hath whereof to glory*. In the like distinguishing manner he speaks of the salvation of sinners, Ephes. ii. 8, 9. "For *by* "*grace* are ye saved, through faith—not of works, "lest any man should boast." Abraham would have had whereof to boast, had he been received to favor and justified on account of any obedience of his own.

THESE observations are sufficient to determine the sense of the word *grace* when it is used to express the goodness of God in the salvation of sinners, on one hand; and, the nature of *the consideration* on which this salvation is conferred, on the other.

THAT the wisdom of *grace* in the salvation of sinners will be, at least, greatly obscured, if the atonement and righteousness of Christ are not the great and only consideration on account of which such mercy is bestowed, appears thus, viz.

1. THE *evidence* of grace in the salvation of any one, must be in proportion to the evidence there is of his guilt and ill-desert. Grace can be seen no farther than the ill-desert of its object is seen. Should any of the human race be saved, without public evidence, at the same time, exhibited of their desert of the displeasure and anger of God; it could not be evident, that their salvation is by grace: Nor, of course, could they be to the praise of the glory of divine grace. Admitting, it may be known to God, that they are saved by grace; still, there being no public evidence or manifestation of it, a great and important end, which God evidently has in view, in the salvation of sinners, would be unattained; and, the heavenly host

could not ascribe that glory and praise to God, which are justly due to him for his *wonderful mercy and grace*. If *grace* be the bestowment of good, where only evil is deserved—and this be necessarily implied in scriptural ideas of grace; it must be obvious, that grace can no further appear, than the guilt of the object appears. It must, also follow, that the degree of grace in the salvation of the sinner, must be estimated by the degree of ill-desert, which appears in him. If there be but little visibility of his desert of evil, the *grace*, by which he is saved, must appear proportionably small. Where there is *no* visibility or evidence of guilt in the object of divine favor there can be *no* evidence, that any good he receives is of *grace*.

2. The estimate, which *God* forms of the character of any one, it must be admitted, affords the best and only sure rule, by which *we* are to estimate it. God is the Judge.—He judges righteous judgment—Estimates characters and actions truly and righteously.—There can be no error in him. That this is the best and only sure rule by which *we* can estimate moral characters and actions, will, probably, be admitted.

3. It must, also, be admitted, that God's *ultimate treatment of his creatures* affords us the best rule we can have for judging of the estimate he forms of their morral characters. When God *in no way* manifests any displeasure with any one, we can have no right to conclude, that his morral character merits displeasure. When God bestows favors and blessings on any one, giving no visible testimony, at the same time, that he holds his moral character in abhorrence; we have all the same reason to acquit him, in our own minds of guilt, as we have to conclude, that the judge of all the earth does right, and is a holy and just God. Where we can discover no marks of divine displeasure against any one, we can have no right to conclude,

that he merits any :—And, therefore, can have no ground for considering any good bestowed on him as being of *grace*. If any one be finally and eternally saved, without evidence of his ill-desert in God's sight, we can have no just reason to conclude, that his salvation is *by grace*.

HENCE it must follow, that the visibility and evidence of *grace*, in the salvation of sinners, must be in proportion to the manifestations, which are made of God's anger with them, and of his abhorrence of them. If this be so, it must follow, that nothing ever took place, which so clearly and fully evinces the sinner's salvation to be *by grace*, as the atonement Christ has made for sin by his own blood. If Christ was truly a divine person, and the sufferings he endured, when he bore the sins of his people in his own body on the tree, were expressions and testimonies of the anger of the just God against sinners ; the evidence that their salvation is *by grace*—free, rich grace and infinitely undeserved mercy, must be clear and incontrovertible.

ON the other hand ; if Christ be but a mere creature, no sufferings he endured were any, either *expressions*, or *testimonies* of the anger of God with sinners : On which hypothesis *no atonement* is made for sin ; and, there will, of course, be *no evidence* that the salvation of sinners is *by grace*. This is but the natural and genuine consequence of denying, that atonement was made for sin by the death and sufferings of Christ—And, that no atonement is, in fact, made, will be, on all hands admitted, if he be not a divine person, truly God as well as man.

IT must further, appear that, if the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, and of the atonement made by him be denied, no regard, that we can see, is had to God's holy law, or the righteousness of the law, in the par-

don and justification of believers—We can discover no way, in which the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them; or, how that holy law, which they have ever been under—which they have awfully violated—and the curse and condemnation of which they have incurred, is magnified and made honorable. On this principle, the law of God, for aught we can see, is perfectly given up and set aside in every instance, wherein a sinner is pardoned and saved.

SHOULD it be said that, though the doctrine of the atonement be given up, it cannot properly be said, that the law of God is set aside by his bestowing a pardon on *penitents;* because the repentance of the sinner *being made necessary to his pardon, and the condition of it*, evidently proves a respect had to the law, and to the righteousness of it, in his salvation. In reply to this, it may be observed, that, as has been before suggested, *this* will suppose, that the holy law of God has no other demand on the sinner, than that he repent—That his repentance and return to obedience are a *fulfilling of the righteousness of the law.* And if this, in truth be the case, nothing can be more obvious than that his being received to favor and saved, is not, and cannot be, *by grace.* For every one will see, that, where the righteousness of the law is so fulfilled by any one, that he is not condemned by it, no *grace* can be exercised toward him in his being preserved from the execution of any penalty of it. But whether the sinner's repentance and return to obedience be all the righteousness, which the law of God, in strictness, require, or not; it is manifest, that, if no other righteousness of the law be fulfilled in the penitent, than what is implied in his return to obedience, the law of God, which requires perfect obedience, and that on pain of death, is exceedingly abated, and very greatly mitigated in his case. And, if his repentance and return to obedience are *the consideration* on which he is

restored to the divine favor, it is very obvious, that his salvation is not *by grace*. On whatever ground it be supposed, that a *sinner* is restored to the favor of God, if it be in a way wherein God's holy and righteous displeasure with him is, in no way rendered as visible, as it would have been in the execution of the penalty of the law upon him ; it is very evident, that it cannot appear he is saved *by grace*.

But, to the justness of this conclusion, it may be objected, that "Though God spare and save the sinner, without any regard had to any honor done his broken law, either by an atonement made for sin, or by the penitence of the sinner ; it must, nevertheless, fully appear from *his holy word*, that the subject of this salvation has incurred the curse ; and, consequently, that he is saved *by grace*."

To this it may be replied, that, if the government God administers do not accord, in the true spirit of it with the construction we *may have put* on his word, we shall feel ourselves compelled to interpret his mind by the former, rather than by what we may have apprehended to be the real meaning and import of the latter. God's actual administration of government over his creatures, is the best comment on the law he has given them : For he is of one mind, and none can turn him. It must, however, be *most dishonorable to God*, to suppose any the least disagreement between the *administration of his government*, and the *true spirit and import of his written law*. Still, it is difficult to see how the supposition can be avoided, if it be admitted, that God, in any instance, receive to favor a creature, whom his word condemns, without any regard had to any honor done his broken law, as the ground of it. If God do this, we, certainly, can see no evidence of such displeasure, in the divine mind, against sin in every instance, as we had

apprehended the threatenings and curses of his word import:—And how, in such a case, we can avoid supposing that we have improperly interpreted his word, is not seen. If indeed such displeasure does exist in the divine mind, it must be uncontrovertible, that, as far as the evidence and visibility of it fail, so far there is a defect of evidence, that any favors bestowed are *of grace*. We see not how the Deity himself can feel that he exercises *grace* in the bestowment, even of the highest favors on one, whom *he does not view* as deserving of endless perdition. Nor, unless he exhibit, in his government, such a view of the object of his favor, can we suppose, that he requires his creatures to consider any blessings, however great, to be fruits of unmerited mercy and grace.

It is objected again, (if indeed it be admitted by the rejecters of the doctrine of Christ's Divinity and atonement, that any of mankind will be finally sentenced to endless punishment,) that "the punishment of "*some*, will be a public evidence, that *all deserve it;* "and, therefore, that the divine mind holds the per- "sonal characters of the *saved* in no better light, than "it does those of the *damned*—That the punishment "of the damned will, therefore, be a public and stand- "ing evidence and proof of the estimate, which infi- "nite righteousness forms of men universally:—Con- "sequently, that evidence cannot be wanted, that such "as are saved, are saved *by grace*."

In reply, it may be asked, Where is the evidence, that infinite righteousness estimates the characters and deserts of the saved in no other light, than it does those of the *damned?* It cannot by the supposition arise from any atonement, either made or required, for their sins, any more than for the sins of the damned. Nor can we collect this evidence from any thing said in the word of God; because the actual treat-

ment, which the saved receive at the hand of God, stands in the way of any inference *we can make* against their characters, from any other consideration whatever.

If it be, that God pardon and save sinners *absolutely*, without any regard had, either to their repentance, or any atonement made by Christ *as a reason or consideration* on which they are received to favor; it cannot be seen, that he makes his *word* the rule of his *government*.—That, the character, which *we should apprehend*, from the threatenings and denunciations of his word, really belonged and was essential to him, ever appears and is acted out in his administration. On the hypothesis before us it must be manifest, that, from the *word* of God, we cannot be authorised to conclude, either that all mankind, or a part will be finally saved, or eternally perish.

But you will still object, and say, "Even on your "own hypothesis of the real Divinity of Christ the "Saviour, and of an atonement made by him for sin; "if any sinners of mankind are saved, (as all grant "there will be,) *the word* must cease to be a rule of "the divine government, or to afford evidence of the "estimate, which God forms, of the characters of men. "For, even on your own plan, there is as real a disa-"greement between the *word* of God and the *govern-"ment he actually administers*, as on ours."

In reply, we observe,

1. That, admitting the Divinity and atonement of Christ, and the application of the benefits of his righteousness to believers, it will not appear, that *the word* of God ceases to be the rule, by which he estimates, and by which we are to estimate the characters of men universally. Christ came into the world to save

sinners—For the sins of men he was made a propitiation. If the sacrifice he made of himself is accepted and they, who believe on him, receive its benefits ;—*this* can be no evidence, that God estimates their characters differently from what they are estimated in his written word. *The salvation of men by Christ* can be no evidence, that their characters are, originally, in any measure different from those of such as *perish* ; or, that they are less deserving of endless punishment. Nor can it be any evidence, that God is less offended with them ; or, that he holds their characters in less abhorrence, than he does the characters of those, whom he sends to destruction—For, notwithstanding their being believers, it is the *ungodly* whom God justifies. From these considerations it must be manifest, that the salvation of sinners through the blood and atonement of a *Divine Saviour*, gives not the least reason to apprehend, that God estimates their characters and deserts, in any measure, differently from the estimate given of them in his written word ;—But instead of that, affords abundant proof that he does not ; otherwise *such a propitiation* must have been unnecessary for them. *The word* will, consequently, still remain a perfect interpreter of the divine mind, exhibiting the character of God in no other light, than he himself exhibits it in his government. The salvation of sinners *through the merit and righteousness of Christ* it must, therefore, appear, does no injury to the authority, or the credit and honor of the *written word* of God. Nor,

2. WILL it appear, on sinners being pardoned and saved through the merit and righteousness of Christ, that *the word of God* ceases to be the rule of his *government*. *The word* estimates the ill-desert of the transgressor, and shows in what abhorrence his character is holden by the righteous Governor of the world. When this abhorrence of the divine mind is made as fully visible in its natural fruits, as though the curse had

been literally executed on the offender—And it is made evidently to appear to be *the divine abhorrence of the character of the pardoned sinner* in whatever way this be done, the authority of the law is maintained, and the spirit and import of it supported in government. Every thing in this case is done, which is necessary to give commanding influence to the written law, and preserve it from reproach—And, every thing necessary to honor and vindicate that high and holy character of the righteous Governor of the world, which *his word* represents him to possess.

All will agree, that *the mere misery and wretchedness of creatures* whatever their characters may be, can do no honor to the divine character, or answer any valuable end in government. Unless punishments tend to deter from crimes—Unless they exhibit a character in the righteous Governor of the world, which excites a fear of offending on one hand, and a confidence in his protection and defence of the innocent on the other; it must appear, that they are useless, either as a manifestation of the glory of God, or a security of the peace and welfare of his kingdom. *It is the visibility of the just displeasure of the holy God against offenders* that renders punishments useful, and promotes the honor and security of the divine government. This righteous displeasure is expressed *in words* in the threatenings of the law of God; and, in its *effects* in the destruction, which will be inflicted on final impenitents. If this displeasure against the deserving object, in every instance of transgression, be expressed and become visible; the law is honored, its end answered, and its authority supported—For, *not the sufferings of the sinner* do this, but the character, the just anger of God appearing *in them*. In whatever way this holy displeasure of God against the sinner become visible, the ends of government, for aught we can see, are answered; and, the divine administra-

tion is so far from disagreeing with *the word*, that it most evidently corresponds with it.

It is admitted that the law which sentences sinners universally and indiscriminately to a punishment, which will be a proper and adequate expression of the abhorrence in which sin and sinners are universally holden by the divine Lawgiver, is not and cannot be *literally* fulfilled, if any are saved, even though it be through the atonement of Christ. But it is insisted, that in the pardon and salvation of believers *through this atonement*, no disrespect is shewn to the law of God, either as being a just estimate of the demerit of sin or, of the divine abhorrence of it: Nor does it, in the least, favor the opinion, that the *divine law* is not the rule agreeably to which his government will be forever administered. In all the the respects, in which the divine law is useful and important as a rule of government, it is honored and magnified *even in the salvation of sinners* through the atonement.

Nor can it be reasonably objected, that the atonement, viewed in the light in which it has been represented, in any degree obscures the lustre of *grace* in the salvation of sinners:—Instead of that, on the contrary, it serves greatly to illustrate the glory of sovereign grace in this salvation. For, the clearer and fuller evidence we have of the divine righteous abhorrence of the characters of men, the more evident it must be, that if any of them are pardoned and saved, it must be by an act of grace. But what event ever did or can take place, to exhibit the divine abhorrence of sin and the sinner in the light, in which it must appear in his laying on his own dear Son the iniquities of us all, and wounding him for our transgressions! To see the Lord of Glory bearing his people's sins in his own body on the tree.—This being the only way in which a door of mercy could be opened to sinners—

exhibits such a view of God's just and righteous indignation, as nothing else which we can conceive, could possibly have done. When he, who was God manifest in flesh, interposed and stood between *divine justice* and guilty men, to avert from us its awful blow, though *it* had seemed for a long time, as it were to have lain asleep; the voice is immediately heard from the throne, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, "and against the man that is my fellow, saith the "Lord of Hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep "shall be scattered." Beholding this sight, who could but reason, as the blessed Saviour himself did when going to the cross, "If they do these things in a "green tree, what shall be done in the dry!" Could it be, that by his arduous and glorious work, the Great God and Saviour *brought himself into debt to his rebel subjects!* On what possible grounds can *we* found any claims! Because Jesus has so loved us, as to wash away our sins in his own blood, shall we, therefore, claim pardon and salvation *as our due?* Instead of that, how manifest is it, that nothing could ever, so clearly and fully demonstrate, that the salvation of sinners must be only *by grace*, as the atonement made by Christ—or, manifest such unspeakable richness and glory in *that grace* by which sinners of mankind are saved!

If, on the other hand, the sinner be received to favor without any clear and sensible manifestation of that displeasure against him, which really exists in the holy mind of God; how evident is it that the fear of offending, naturally excited by threatenings and penalties, must necessarily be diminished—the law lose its authority—And the Lawgiver incur disrespect! For aught we can see, *this must be the case* respecting, both the law and the Great Lawgiver, if sinners be forgiven, in any instance whatever, without an atonement.

AGAIN; if sinners be forgiven without any atonement, it must be on the ground, that, neither the glory of God, nor the good of his moral kingdom, require any manifestation of divine displeasure against them. Here it will be kept in mind, that, by *atonement* is meant a *manifestation of that just and righteous anger of God, which the sinner deserves, in some other way than in his punishment.* Considering the subject in this light, it must be obvious that, if the sinner be received to favor *without an atonement*, no exhibition is, in fact, made of that righteous anger, of which he is the object. And, if God receive sinners, in this way, to favor, it must appear that neither his own character and glory, nor the good of his kingdom render it necessary there should be any manifestations of his anger against the sins of men—And this, is the same as to say that, neither the glory of God, nor the good of his kingdom require, that he ever *appear* to be angry with the sinner.

THIS point may however, perhaps, need further illustration, before we proceed to any inferences from it.

IF God is indeed angry with the sinner, as the holy Scriptures most expressly and abundantly assert; this anger can appear and be expressed only in his inflicting punishment. We conceive of no way, in which the righteous Governor of the world can manifest his hatred of *moral* evil, but by inflicting *natural.* Natural evils we, accordingly, find to be the only penalties of his holy law. Where no natural evil is inflicted, there will be no evidence, that the Lawgiver is offended. From the bestowment of only felicity and good, we infer the well pleasedness of the wise Dispenser of rewards and punishments. In this way the divine oracles clearly authorize us to judge—The word of God being filled with promises of blessings and good to the righteous, and threatenings of curses and evil to the

wicked. We conceive of no way, in which God's anger with sinners can become visible; or, in which his rectoral government can correspond with his holy law; unless natural evil be inflicted on the offender, or on some other person, to whom the offender stands in such a relation, that he himself appears to be the object of displeasure.

If this be so, it must be manifest, that, if the sinner be forgiven and received to favor *without any atonement being made for his sins*, it must be on the ground, that neither the glory of God, nor the good of his moral kingdom, require any *expression* of God's anger with him:—For, we may be assured, that the great and holy God will never do any thing which shall be inconsistent with his own glory, and the best and highest good of his moral kingdom.

From such an hypothesis as this, the following consequences naturally result, viz.

1. That *threatenings* are unnecessary and useless. Where evil need not be executed, it never need be threatened. We see no valuable end answered by threatenings, which never need be executed. When *executions* are unnecessary, *threatenings* are equally so—yea, more; in as much as threatenings, which never are designed to be executed, and never need be, necessarily sink the character of the ruler, and bring his authority into contempt. It cannot but be seen, that, if the glory of God do not require him to execute, neither does it, to threaten. All objections, therefore, against the necessity of *atonement* in order to the pardon and salvation of sinners, lie with equal weight against every threatening we find in the book of God.

2. If it be so, that the character and glory of God require, neither *executions* nor *threatenings*, it must

appear, that the *sanctions* of his holy law are unnecessary—Or, rather, that the holy law of God is, in fact, without sanctions. Of what use, then is *a law*, or can it be, in the government of God? What can be the benefit of a law, (if, indeed, there can be *a law*) without penal sanctions? It can suggest no motive to obedience from the consideration of any *good* as its reward; nor, restrain from disobedience, by the fear of *evil*. *That* indeed, can, with no propriety, be termed a *law*, which has no sanctions—which does not enforce duty by the consideration of the good and evil consequences, which shall follow obedience and the reverse.

3. If it be unnecessary that God *manifest* anger against sin and the sinner, it must be unnecessary that any such affection *exist* in the divine mind—And, on this hypothesis, we can, surely, have no evidence that it does. It must be clear that, if, neither the glory of God, nor the good of his kingdom, require a *manifestation* of divine displeasure where moral evil is actually committed; neither do they require the *existence* of any such displeasure. It cannot be seen how it will be for the glory of God to *entertain* an anger, which it will not be for his glory to *express*. It must be obvious, that the good of God's moral kingdom requires the existence of nothing in his mind and character, which, it will not be for the good of this kingdom, should be exhibited and become manifest in his government.—If any thing of this nature *exist* in the divine mind, (of which, however, we can have no manner of evidence,) it neither is, nor can be, beneficial to the system—Therefore, not a perfection—not a beauty in the character of God. And if there be *any instance* of moral evil against which it is unnecessary, that divine displeasure be witnessed; we can see no reason why it is not unnecessary *in every case*—And, in this short way, arrive at the conclusion, that no such

affection as *anger* with any of his creatures has any place in the divine mind.

If, therefore, sin be forgiven and passed over *in any instance* without an atonement, we see not why it should be thought injurious to the divine character, that *all sin* be passed over without punishment. The salvation of even one sinner, without visible testimonies of the abhorrence, in which his character is holden by the righteous Judge, evidently sets aside the necessity of such testimony in any case whatever. And we may safely confide in it, that *that God*, who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, will never inflict unnecessary punishment.

On the principle, therefore, that sin may be forgiven without an atonement, we can see no reason to believe there ever will be any future punishments—The necessity of them being evidently set aside by the supposition, that pardons may *in this absolute manner* be, in any instance, bestowed. To this conclusion, the reasonings of those, who deny the Divinity of Christ, naturally lead—In this, their principles terminate—And to this conclusion, as the result of their reasonings, they, probably, mean to come. The doctrine of the Divinity of the Saviour, and of the salvation of sinners through an atonement made by his blood, is too nearly related, and stands too closely connected with that of eternal punishments, to be admitted by such as wish to get rid of the latter. For this reason it, probably, is, that it is so strenuously urged, by many, that the Lord Jesus is but a mere creature.

4. It must follow, from the preceding observations, that, if any sinner be finally saved, without an atonement made for his sins, his character is not holden in such divine abhorrence as cannot be adequately expressed in any finite punishment. And, if God be-

stow, on any of the human race, all the blessings and good, which any can imagine will be the reward of the most uncorrupt virtue and innocence; nothing will remain, on the principle before us, from which his abhorrence of their characters can be inferred. When the treatment any one receives, without, at the same time, any manifestation of God's displeasure with him, is the same as that of the righteous, whence shall it be inferred, that his character is viewed in a less favorable light! And, as has been before observed, there can be no ground to conclude, that he experiences *mercy*, and is saved *by grace*.

5. It must appear still further, on the principle that men are saved without any atonement, that there is in fact, *no evidence that God is offended with them*—at least, to a degree that endangers their future and eternal peace. Where there is no exhibition or manifestation of divine displeasure, there can be no evidence, that any displeasure exists. Whoever of mankind entertains a hope of being made finally and everlastingly happy, *no witness being given by natural evils*, that the Great God holds his character in infinite abhorrence; must do it on the ground, that God has no such abhorrence of him:—he can have no other. And should any one be *on this ground* spared and saved, it cannot be, that he should have any apprehension, that his salvation is *by grace*—That it is a fruit of mere undeserved mercy and grace.

With good reason, therefore, may it be concluded, that such as expect finally to meet the favor of God, and yet deny, both the Divinity of Christ, and the necessity of atonement, found their hopes, *not on the mercy of God*—not on any thing the holy Scriptures term *grace*;—but, on an apprehension, that they, neither do nor can deserve eternal evil at the hand of God. And for the same reason, that *one* may expect

to be saved on this ground, *another* may ; and so may all mankind. And, if this be the true ground, on which any one of the human race will be saved from eternal destruction, it may safely be concluded, that no monuments will be ever made of God's *eternal displeasure.*

SHOULD such sentiments be found to be the true doctrine of the word of God, a disbelief of the Divinity of Christ, and of atonement, *whatever may have been thought the sense of the holy scriptures on these important subjects*, will endanger no man's future peace and tranquillity. But, on the other hand, if eternal punishment will express no more than the displeasure, which the just God really has against sinful men ; a rejection of these interesting and important truths, must certainly prove fatal.

To admit, that mankind are, universally, sinners and exposed to endless evil from the hand of God ; and that, no atonement being made, all, or even any, will be finally saved ; naturally leads to a disregard of the threatenings of God's holy word—And, indeed, to their being treated with contempt. And, if the threatenings of the word of God may be disregarded, it will be evident, that they neither suggest motives to obedience, nor arguments against it. And, if the *threatenings* we find in the oracles of God may be disregarded, so may the *promises :* For, they are, both, from one and the same mouth, and rest on the same foundation. We may as well suppose, there may be instances wherein the *latter* may fail of fulfilment, as the *former* of execution. If God's hatred of iniquity may, in any instance, fail of being expressed ; so, also, may his love of righteousness—For it is the same, uniform, disposition, which is exercised in the love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity. If it may consist with the character of God and the stability and

perfection of his government to suppress expressions of displeasure, in any instance wherein iniquity takes place; we see not why he may not, also, as well withhold, to an equal degree, expressions of his approbation of righteousness. It is, therefore, manifest that, if the threatenings of the word of God fail in any instance whatever, its promises may also. And, if either, or both may fail in one instance, they, both, may, in all. And when, both threatenings and promises are given up, as to any worthiness of either fear, or confidence; what is there left in the book of the Scriptures, which deserves credit, or is of any real worth. On this ground it must appear, there can be no satisfactory evidence, that what are usually termed the *holy Scriptures* are from God—from a Being worthy to be feared, respected, and obeyed as GOD.

These are but the natural consequences of an opinion, that sinners, yea, *any sinner* may be forgiven, and received to the favor of God and eternal life, without any witness or manifestation that, in the estimation of the holy Governor of the world, he is deserving of endless destruction. These, of course, are consequences, which evidently result from a denial, that atonement has been made, by Christ, for sin—And, therefore, on the same ground, from a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

For if it be that Christ is not truly *a divine person*, no atonement is made for sin: And, consequently, if any sinners are saved, it must be without God's exhibiting any evidence, in his government, that he holds them guilty of death. And if the guilt of mankind do not in fact, arise to such a height as this, they need be in no apprehensions for their eternal safety *in whatever light they view the character of Christ.* And no one, it may be presumed, who views the subject in

this light, will feel his fears much excited by any threatenings he finds in his Bible; and, consequently, will have as little just ground for placing any confidence in its promises. And when the threatenings of that holy book cease to awaken fear, and its promises, to ensure hope; nothing is left, which can, with any justice, be thought worthy of a revelation from God.

THERE are other, and still further consequences proper to be mentioned, which naturally flow from the sentiment, that sinners may be saved without an atonement—without any *manifestation* of the abhorrence, in which their characters are holden by the righteous Governor of the world.

WE trust it has been made evident that, if any of mankind may be finally and eternally saved, without witness given in the *government* of God, that he views them as deserving of his eternal anger, *threatenings* will naturally cease to be restraints from sin; and, of course, the promises *contained in the holy Scriptures*, to encourage and excite to obedience. And where there are, neither *threatenings* nor *promises* to operate on the minds of men, we can have but very faint ideas of any moral government exercised over them.

MORAL creatures act from *motive*: And we know of no other way in which *moral government* can be exercised over them, than by rules of conduct prescribed, and enforced by promises and threatenings. Creatures, incapable of influence from motives of good and evil, happiness and misery, are, neither themselves *moral*, nor proper objects of moral government. And where creatures are subjected to no rules of conduct enforced by promises and threatenings, we see no sense in which they can be under law. It is essential

to moral law, that it contain rules of action enforced by promises and threatenings.—These are fit to operate as motives on the minds of moral creatures. But if the force of the threatenings of the word of God be destroyed, the influence of the promises must equally cease; and, moral government will then be at an end.

It will be in vain to consider men as under the *moral government* of their Great Creator, so long as they are not subject to rules of action enforced by promises and threatenings: And equally in vain to expect, that threatenings will have the influence of motives, if no manifestations of divine displeasure are seen, or to be expected to follow transgressions. If the promises and threatenings contained in the holy Scriptures, are set aside, we have yet to learn, both our duty and the motives by which it is enforced.—And when *this* is left to conjecture—each one having an equal right to decide on the subject; it is easily seen, that the rules of duty will be extremely vague and uncertain, and the motives to the practice of it equally weak and feeble. On such an hypothesis, it must necessarily occur, that the evidence of our being under *moral government* is exceedingly small, if not wholly taken away. Should we feel ourselves subject to no rules of action, but such as our own minds collect from other sources than those of divine revelation; and these enforced by no other motives, no other sanctions than our own reason and inclinations suggest; we cannot but at once see, that the bands of moral obligation will be extremely weak; and, moral law nearly, if not wholly done away. If it be left to us to prescribe, either the rules of duty to our Creator, or the punishments, which shall follow their neglect; it is obvious, that the reins of government are not in the hand of God, but that his honor and glory must lie at our mercy.

On the principle now under consideration, it seems, therefore, necessary to admit, that the human race is not governed by law—by *moral rules* enforced by divine sanctions—by promises and threatenings from their Creator, GOD. And all this naturally and clearly results from the sentiment, that the holy Governor of the world pardons and restores sinners to his favor, without manifesting, at the same time, a displeasure and anger with them for their sins, equally fitted to deter from disobedience, as the execution of the threatened penalty. When it is thought and expected, that sin is and may be forgiven without any such manifestation of divine displeasure as the threatenings of the word of God are fitted to awaken us to fear; it cannot but be seen, that these threatenings lose their influence to restrain. And, in proportion as it is hoped and believed, that sinners may be received to favor, without God's ever manifesting, in its natural fruits, the displeasure with them, which his threatenings naturally import; in that proportion will threatenings cease to be motives of action, and lose their influence to restrain us. And as far as the influence of *these motives* is destroyed, so far that of the promises must necessarily fail—And *moral government*, for aught we see, come to an end.

These consequences naturally flow from the doctrine, that sin may be, and is forgiven without an atonement—that is, without divine manifestations of that displeasure and anger, which the threatenings of God's holy word naturally lead us to suppose, exist, whenever his holy law is transgressed. For on the plan of salvation without an atonement, it must undeniably follow, that fear of future punishment is greatly lessened, if not wholly taken away. And, if Christ be not a divine person, all ideas of atonement must be given up: And, of consequence it will be difficult for us to conceive, what sort of moral government, or

whether any, is exercised over us. These consequences, therefore, naturally result from a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

It is yet further to be remembered, that, as far as the evidence fails, of a *moral government* being constantly exercised over the world—over men; so far are we from having evidence, that the world *has a moral Governor*. As far as we imbibe sentiments, and entertain principles, which, in their just and natural consequences, weaken the evidence of our being under moral government; we, so far, necessarily fall into doubt and uncertainty with respect to the *existence* of a moral Governor.—On which principle, every thing before us is dark and uncertain—even whether we shall ever have any future existence, or not—and if we have, where, or under what circumstances it will be, lies wholly and entirely in the dark. What could ever originate principles, which naturally lead to such consequences as these, and terminate in them, but that disposition of heart, spoken of in the holy Scriptures, the language of which is, NO GOD!

It may serve further to illustrate the subject, to observe, that the perfect holiness of God necessarily implies his hatred of iniquity. God is LOVE: and this is a disposition, inclining him with infinite strength, to *do good*—to diffuse happiness, and promote and advance the felicity of his moral kingdom. In proportion as the Great Governor of the world loves the good and seeks the welfare of his kingdom, He must of necessity abhor and detest whatever tends to obstruct its peace and prosperity. God's hatred of iniquity must necessarily be as great as his love of righteousness, and bear an exact proportion to it.—The truth of these observations will not, probably, be contested.

Hence it must follow, that, uniformity of charac-

ter, in God, rquires that his hatred of iniquity, whenever and wherever it may take place, be rendered as visible, in his administration of government, as his love of righteousness. As it never could be believed, that God loved righteousness, should the righteous be left unprotected and unrewarded; no more could it, that he hated iniquity, should there be no marks of displeasure with those who commit it. The same disposition, which inclines the holy God to *manifest* his love of righteousness in his creatures, must necessarily incline him with equal strength, to *manifest* his hatred of their iniquity—Nor can it any more consist with the glory of God and the good of the system, that he suppress the manifestation of the latter, than of the former.

Hence it must clearly follow, that if the glory of God and the good of his moral kingdom require that he manifest his approbation of righteousness in his creatures *in every instance of it;* they equally require, that he manifest his abhorrence of iniquity *in every instance* in which it takes place. Love as necessarily requires, and the good of God's great kingdom as imperiously demands, that every injury to divine government be avenged, as that every act of righteousness be acknowledged. And, we can conceive of no way in which this can be done, but by rewards and punishments.

It will be obvious to every reflecting mind, that, if there be no exhibition, in the work and death of Christ, of God's just abhorrence of the characters, the sins of such as are saved by him; all the wickedness of that innumerable multitude, which will finally compose *the body of Christ*, will be passed by without any marks of divine displeasure. And if this be so, where shall we find satisfactory evidence, that the virtue and righteousness of such as follow the Lamb, may

not, also, be passed by without marks of divine approbation!

THESE are among the difficulties, which naturally occur respecting the doctrines of divine revelation, and the nature of the moral government, which is exercised over us, on a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

HAVING taken a view of some of the consequences naturally resulting from a denial of the atonement made by Christ, we observe,

II. THAT if Christ be not truly a divine person, God as well as man, it must be, for aught we can see, that he gave much occasion for his *honesty* to be called in question.

THERE were many things, in the life and actions of Jesus of Nazareth, while he was on earth, which it cannot but appear to us, were so far from that piety and meekness, which are ever characteristic of true goodness, in creatures, that, were he but a man, we see not how to reconcile them with common honesty. Waving the point, at present, of his actually claiming to possess powers and attributes, which are peculiar to Divinity, it is manifest, that he said and did many things, which impressed the minds of, both his friends and enemies, *with a belief*, that he claimed to be something more than a mere creature.

IT appears evident, that the Jewish rulers, the scribes and pharisees thought that Jesus claimed, both a character and a respect, which belong only to the Most High God, and can be due only to Him. On being faulted by his enemies for healing an impotent man, on the Sabbath, Jesus answered, John, v. 17, "My "Father worketh hitherto, and I work." On this, we are told, in the succeeding verse, that the "Jews

" sought to kill him, because he not only had broken " the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, " making himself equal with God." The connexion in which these words of the Saviour were spoken, must naturally have suggested to the Jews, the construction they put on them. He was queried with upon having wrought a miracle of healing, which it required an almighty power to effect. His reply, that his Father wrought hitherto, and he worketh, would naturally suggest the idea, that That Being, whose power could controul nature, was He, whom he called his Father; and that, in common with Him, whom he stiled his Father, he himself possessed power over nature, and could controul it. Therefore, instead of either reproving them for the construction they put on his words, or correcting them for any mistake; he proceeds with a train of observations, which they could not but suppose, were designed to vindicate his claim to prerogatives and powers, which can belong to no mere creature. He tells them, that, " What things soever the " Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise— " That as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quick- " eneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he " will—That all judgment is committed unto the Son, " that all men should honor the Son, even as they hon- " or the Father—That the hour was now come, when " the dead should hear the voice of the Son of God, " and, hearing should live—That the hour was coming " when all, in their graves should hear his voice, and " come forth." On supposition, that the Jews had misinterpreted the meaning of this Great Teacher sent from God, and, without ground, inferred from what he had just said, that he claimed an equality with God; can any one rationally suppose, that the things, which this charge occasioned him to say of himself, were, either designed or fitted to correct their mistake? Any one may see that, instead of this, the whole tenor of what our Saviour said on the subject, had a direct ten-

dency to confirm them in the opinion, that he, in fact, did claim to himself, such an equality with God, as it would be blasphemy in any mere creature to assume.

But this was not the only opportunity and, one might think, the most pressing reason, the Saviour had, for disavowing such high claims, did he mean never to be understood to make them. On another occasion, speaking of *God* as his Father, he had explicitly said, "I and my Father are one," John, x. 30. On this, the Jews took up stones to stone him.—He mildly says, "many good works have I shewed "you from my Father; for which of these works do "ye stone me?" They say, for no good work, but for blasphemy; because thou, being a man, makest thyself equal with God.—Does this true and faithful Witness, as honesty must have necessarily dictated, had he been but a man, a mere creature, reject with detestation, every pretension to so high a prerogative? Instead of that, he evidently proceeds, to the apprehension of the Jews, still to maintain the claim, and justify himself in making it. If those, to whom the word of God came, were stiled God's, "say ye, said he, of "him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into "the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I "am the Son of God?" He then appeals to the works he wrought, as evidence, that the Father was in him, and he in the Father. Could the Jews reasonably suppose, that he meant any other, than to vindicate his claim to an equality with God? That they, in fact, did understand him in this light, is evident from their seeking again to take him.

To pass by other instances; Jesus was finally apprehended, and brought to trial, before the high priest, on a charge of blasphemy—the charge being this, that he claimed to be the Son of God in a sense, which was understood to imply equality with God. Jesus him-

self well knew, that this was the charge, on which they meant to execute on him the penalty, prescribed by the law of Moses, for blasphemy.—He could not be ignorant of this: For, not only had the Jews repeatedly sought to stone him, on an apprehension, that he claimed powers, and challenged prerogatives, which can belong to no mere creature; but the high priest, while he stood at his bar, adjured him, by the living God, to tell him, whether he were the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus immediately confesses, that he claimed to be all that, which he well knew they considered it as blasphemy in him to claim: And, instead of putting any other or different construction on terms and phrases, in which he had often expressed what the character was, in which he appeared and acted, adds, "I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the "Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and "coming in the clouds of heaven," Matt. xxvi. 64. On the supposition, that Jesus was but a mere creature, a man, why did not the high priest reason justly in saying, "What further need have we of witnesses? "Behold now ye have heard his blasphemy." And how could Jesus be considered in any other light, than that of a blasphemer, if, he were, in fact, but a mere creature? To hear any man, or mere creature speak of himself as *the Son of God*—As *doing the same works, which God doeth*—As *quickening from the dead and raising up whom he will*—As *having all judgment committed to him*—As *causing the dead to hear his voice, and live*; and, asserting that it is *his voice*, which shall finally raise all the dead, some to everlasting life, and others to damnation. Should we now hear any man assert all this of himself, should we not immediately conclude, that he took to himself a character, and assumed a place infinitely too high for a *creature*?—Further than this; Should we hear him speak of God as his Father, and assert, that *he and the Father are one*—That *the Father is in him, and he in the Father*

—That, to the question, whether he were the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, reply, in express and positive terms, *I am*, immediately adding, that all shall *see him sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*, as Mark xiv. 61, 62, should we hesitate to say, that he made himself equal with God? Can we reasonably think, that the Jews and their rulers were in fault, in judging that Jesus assumed an equality with God, and, on supposition of his being a mere creature, was a blasphemer? Their criminality must have lain in that heardness of heart, which blinded them to the abundant evidence, which Christ really and most clearly exhibited, of his possessing attributes and powers, and doing works, which proved the Divinity of his person, and the divine excellency of his character; and, not in the want of that candor, or art, which could so analyze an explain seemingly offensive words and phrases, as to make them applicable to a mere creature. Were Jesus, in fact, no more than a mere creature, the Jewish rulers, for aught we can see, must have judged rightly, when they said, "we have "a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he "made himself the Son of God."

It may now, then, with propriety be asked, whether it can reasonably be supposed, that any man of sense, of integrity and honesty, would ever suffer himself to be executed as a blasphemer *in making himself equal with God*, when he could have refuted the charge with the utmost ease, and *that* by a word's speaking—explicitly denying, that he made the least pretensions to any such high claims; and renouncing, with abhorrence, every idea of furnishing any just ground for so horrid a charge?

Jesus well knew, that it was on a charge of blasphemy, that he was arrested, and finally executed. He knew, too, that he had spoken of himself, his powers

and character, in terms, which were very offensive to the Jews—that he had, again and again, used expressions, which led them to think, that he challenged to himself prerogatives and powers, which can belong to no mere creature. He was conscious, too, that whenever they brought a charge against him for these high pretensions, instead of saying any thing to remove unreasonable jealousies on their part, his replies were always such, as actually confirmed them in the opinion, that he claimed an equality with God.—Finally he suffered and died under the imputation of making and maintaining this high claim, without ever saying a word, either to deny, or refute the charge; or, even giving a hint, that it was unjust. All this remains to be reconciled with wisdom and good sense, with integrity and honesty in the man Jesus, did he really mean to claim no other prerogatives and powers, than what he possessed in common with creatures, or with other inspired men.—Did he really mean to claim no character or powers above those of a mere creature, it seems impossible to reconcile his conduct with common honesty and integrity. We are, therefore, necessarily reduced to the dilemma, of being obliged to confess, that Jesus claimed to possess, in himself, true and real Divinity; or, that we must remain incapable of reconciling his conduct with common honesty. If we choose the former part, we must be compelled to believe, that he was really a divine person:—If the latter, that he was not an honest man, but an impostor and blasphemer.

HAVING mentioned some of the reasons, which the Jews and their rulers had, for believing that Jesus claimed a character above that of any mere creature; we may, further, consider what apprehensions, it would be natural to suppose, his disciples would have of him in this respect.

Besides the things, which they saw and heard, in common with the Jews, his enemies; there were many things, which passed particularly between Christ and his disciples, and frequent conversations he held with them by themselves, every way tending to impress their minds with a belief, that he claimed to possess a character infinitely above that of any mere creature. Some of these will now be mentioned, without observing the particular order in which they took place.

On a certain occasion, Christ asked his disciples their opinion of him, saying "Whom say ye that I "am"? Peter speaking in the name of the rest of the disciples then present, as well as his own, answered and said, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living "God. Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed "art thou, Simon-Barjona: for flesh and blood hath "not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in "heaven." On this, "He charged them, that they "should tell no man, that he was Jesus, the Christ." Matt. xvi. 15—17, 20. Christ's claiming to be the Christ, the Son of God, was considered, by the Jews, the same as his asserting an equality with God: And Christ never reproved, either the Jews, or his disciples, for supposing, that his professing himself to be *the Son of God*, was really professing, that he partook of the very essence of that God, whose Son he, so often said he was. And, when we consider the acquaintance they had with the writings of the ancient prophets, and the firm belief they had, that they were divinely inspired: we can hardly suppose otherwise, than that they expected, when Christ, the promised Messiah, should come, he would appear in a character above that of any mere creature. They had no doubt, but the second psalm was a prophecy and prediction of Christ. There, they noticed, that the Most High God stiles him his SON—That He is the LORD, whom

the judges of the earth are exhorted to serve with trembling. To them was it, also, equally clear, that the words of David, in, Ps. cx, were applicable to Christ, and only to him. And when they found that Jehovah stiled *him* Lord, and would send the rod of *his* strength out of Zion, and declare, that *his* people should be willing in the day of *his* power ; what less could they suppose, than that there would be a union between the Christ and the Lord Jehovah, which it would be blasphemous for any mere creature to claim.

Not only both friends and enemies of Christ were sensible, that the several passages, from the above mentioned psalms were applicable to their promised Messiah, the Christ ; but they well knew, that it had been promised, that "unto them a child should be "born—to them a *Son* given,—whose name should be "called, *Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God*, the *everlasting Father, The Prince of peace.* Isai. ix. 6. And, that the name of this Son should be *Immanuel*, that is *God with us*, Isai. vii. 14. Having these prophecies all in their hands, and being well acquainted with them, how could the enemies of Christ suppose otherwise, than that it was blasphemy in Jesus, (not believing him to be the promised Messiah,) to speak of himself as being *The Christ the Son of the living God ?* And, how could his own disciples, who believed him to be the promised Messiah, when they confessed *him* to be *The Christ, The Son of the living God*, be supposed to profess any thing less, than a belief that he was truly a divine person ?

But there were many things said by Jesus, particularly to his disciples, which it may naturally be supposed, could hardly fail of impressing them with a belief, that he claimed powers and preeminence, which are peculiar to Deity. After the death of Lazarus, when his sister Martha, understood that Jesus was

coming, she went out to meet him. In the conversation, which passed between them, on that occasion, Jesus stiles *himself the resurrection and the life;* and says, "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, "yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth, and believ-"eth in me shall never die." John, xi. 25, 26.

SUCH was the opinion, which the disciples of Christ had of their Lord, and so great their affection for him, that the thought of his leaving them was very trying and distressing. Jesus, in his great love and tenderness, took much pains to soothe and mitigate their sorrows on so mournful an event; and, to convince them, that it was for their good, that he should ascend up from whence he came. In conversations he held with them, on this subject, such words frequently dropped from his gracious lips, as could hardly fail of impressing a conviction on their minds, that the character and powers he claimed, were above those of any mere creature.—Some of these are especially worthy of notice.

CHRIST said to his disciples, "If ye had known me, "ye should have known my Father also: and from "hence forth ye know him, and have seen him. Phil-"ip said unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it "sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so "long with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father, "and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believ-"est thou not that I am in the Father, and the Fath-"er in me? The words that I speak unto you, I "speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth "in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am "in the Father, and the Father in me—Whatsoever "ye shall ask in my name, *that will I do*, that the "Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall "ask any thing in my name, *I* will do it." John xiv.

7—11, 13, 14. Again Jesus tells them, in the same discourse, "When the Comforter is come, *whom I* "*will send unto you* from the Father, even the Spirit "of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he "shall testify of me." John xv. 26. Christ says, again, in the succeeding chapter, "If I go not away, "the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I "depart, *I will send him unto you.*" Further, "when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide "you into all truth: for he shall not speak of "himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall "he speak: and he shall shew you things to come. "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, "and shall shew it unto you. All things that the "Father hath, are mine: therefore said I, that he "shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

THESE things Christ said to his disciples, just before his crucifixion, to convince them, that it was best for them, and would be much to their advantage, that he should return to the Father, from whence he came; and, to support and comfort them under the melancholy prospect of his leaving them.

NOT only did the disciples see and observe many things in Jesus, while he was conversant with them before his death, which had an evident tendency to impress them with a belief, at least, that he assumed to himself a character, and claimed powers, which are never to be found in a mere creature. But there were things took place, after his resurrection, which were greatly fitted to strengthen and confirm them in that belief.

ON the morning of the resurrection, when the women, who visited the sepulchre, were told, by an angel, that Jesus was risen, and were directed to go, and give information to his disciples, of this joyful

event; on their return, they were met by Jesus himself, and kindly hailed by him. On this, we are told, they came, and held him by the feet, *and worshiped him.* So, when Jesus appeared to his disciples, on a mountain in Galilee, where he had before directed them to meet him, *they worshiped him.* Matt. xxviii. 9, 17. When Thomas, who had not credited the reports of the other disciples, that Jesus had arisen, actually himself saw and handled him, he joyfully exclaims, *My Lord and my God.* John, xx. 28. So when Christ told his disciples, a little before his ascension, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name; and, that they were to be the witnesses of what they had heard and seen; He adds, "behold *I send the promise of* my *Father upon* "*you;* but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye "be endued with power from on high." Afterwards Jesus led out the eleven as far as to Bethany:—There he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And *they worshiped him*, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Luke, xxiv. latter part.

After all this, can it well be supposed, that the minds of his disciples were not strongly impressed with a belief, that Christ assumed to himself a character superior to that of any mere creature? It seems as though they could not fail of being struck with the idea, that he claimed the exercise of powers and prerogatives, which are proper and peculiar to God alone. Again and again did Jesus tell his disciples, that whatsoever they asked of God in his name, *He would do it for them*—Again and again, that *He would send the Comforter unto them.* After his resurrection, he repeatedly suffered his disciples *to worship him*; and, one of them, to call him *his Lord and his God.* And, for all this high respect shown to the Saviour of the

world, they, who offered it, never received the least check from their Lord and master. Before his death, he had told them, that they, who had seen him, had seen the Father—That he was in the Father, and the Father in him—That he was the resurrection and the life—That whosoever liveth and believeth in him, should never die. It does not appear credible, that the disciples could suppose, that a person, who was a mere creature, and claimed nothing to himself, but what may belong to a creature, and be found in such; would ever have spoken of himself, and of his powers and *what he would do*, in such language as this. Nor can it reasonably be supposed, that they should expect no reproof from Jesus, for the high respect and worship they paid him, had he meant to appear, and be received and treated in no higher character, than that of a creature, though commissioned and sent of God to reveal divine truth, as other men had been before him and were after him.

The conduct of Jesus in these respects, was exceedingly different from that of his disciples. Whenever *they* were made the instruments of any miraculous works, they disclaimed their being done by any power or virtue of their own—They attributed all to the power of Jesus. This must have shewn the opinion they had of Jesus. If any such like respect and worship were ever attempted to be paid to them, as *they* paid to the Lord Jesus, they rejected it with a just abhorrence. Thus, when Cornelius, the centurion, met Peter, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him, the Apostle immediately took him up, saying, "stand up: I myself also am a man." Acts x. 25, 26. So, when, at Lystra, upon a striking miracle of healing being wrought by the hands of Paul and Barnabas, the priest of Jupiter brought oxen and garlands, and would have done sacrifice with the people; these pious men, shocked with the thought of receiving such

honors, " rent their clothes, and ran in among the " people, crying out, Sirs, why do you these things? " we also are men of like passions with you, and " preach unto you, that ye should turn from these van- " ities unto the living God, which made heaven and " earth and the sea, and all things that are therein." Acts xiv. 13—15. They utterly disclaimed such honors, as they well knew Jesus had received from his disciples: and *that* without disclaiming *his* right to them, or, in any degree, reproving them for it—honors and worship, which, it must appear, they thought were due to God alone.

So, the beloved disciple was, more than once, reproved for the worship he attempted to offer to the angel, whom Jesus sent to reveal to him the future state of the church and world. Such care was taken by those faithful servants of Christ, as were known to be but mere creatures, that the respect and worship due only to him, who is a jealous God, should be transferred to no other.

One instance more of respect, which was publicly paid Jesus, just before his death, may, with propriety, be mentioned in connexion with others abundantly fitted to impress the minds of, both friends and enemies, that he did not refuse honors, which they considered to be divine. When he rode in triumph into Jerusalem, the week on which he was crucified, his disciples and the multitude, which went before and followed him, animated and raised in their feelings by divine influence, cried " Hosanna to the Son of David: " Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: " Hosanna in the highest." After Jesus entered the temple, children followed him with their hosannas to the Son of David, Matt. xxi. 9, 15. At this the chief priest and scribes took umbrage, and asked Jesus, " Hearest thou what these say?"—And *this* in a

manner, which shewed, that they viewed Jesus as admitting honors to be paid to him, which were due only to the Most High. Jesus, instead of rejecting the imputation, justifies himself in it, by referring to the prediction, that The Lord, "whose name is excellent in "all the earth, should ordain strength out of the "mouths of babes and sucklings." Ps. viii. 1, 2. This prophecy, the Saviour evidently speaks of, as being now fulfilled, in the hosannas uttered, by the children in the temple. These hosannas were to that son of David, whom David himself stiles *his Lord*. According to the application, which Jesus makes of this prophetic prediction, in these praises and hosannas, were perfected the praises of him, whom David thus addresses, "O Jehovah, our Lord, how excel-"lent is thy name in all the earth! who has set thy "glory above the heavens." After so explicit an application of this, then ancient, prophecy to himself, how can it rationally be otherwise supposed, than that, both the friends and enemies of Jesus, then present, believed him to receive honors and praises, which are due only to God? Little evidence is wanted to convince candid minds, that the chief priest and scribes viewed the matter in this light, when they put the question, "hearest thou what these say?" And, on the application they heard him make of the before mentioned prediction, no doubt could remain on their minds, that Jesus admitted divine honors to be paid to him.

A FEW remarks may now be made on the conduct of Jesus, in leaving the minds, more particularly of his disciples, impressed with a belief, that he claimed a character above that of a mere creature, and honors too high to be paid to any but the supreme God.—After a careful attention to the circumstances and things, which have been mentioned; no reasonable doubt, it is thought, can remain of his having left his disciples

strongly impressed with such a belief. Here, then, we observe,

1. THAT Christ appointed a certain number of his disciples, who had accompanied him through the whole of his public ministry, to be his witnesses among all nations, of what they had seen and heard; and, to preach to men repentance and remission of sins in his name. It cannot be otherwise thought, than that Christ meant they should be, every way, suitably furnished to the very important work, to which he appointed them—The success of the gospel, the prosperity of his kingdom on earth, and the salvation of sinners, in every age, all concurred to require it. The Saviour's great concern for this, and his peculiar care in providing for it, appear, especially, in the promise he made them, that *He would send the Spirit of truth*, who should lead them into all truth; And, that *He himself would be with them alway, even unto the end of the world.*

Now can it possibly be, that *that* Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, would leave the minds of these his witnesses under false impressions respecting the character of him, whom they were to preach as the only Saviour of sinners?—Impressions, which would lead them to exhibit him to sinners under a character *infinitely* superior to what belonged to him, and to what he ever took or claimed to himself? Could the Lord Jesus admit, that these his witnesses should preach him to the world, in such a manner, and under such a character as would naturally lead men to pay him a respect, which would derogate from the honor of God?—which would expose, and necessarily expose mankind, in every age, to idolatrous worship.

SHOULD it, to this be replied, that Jesus said enough,

and that on many occasions, to guard the minds of his disciples, as well as those of all others, against their apprehending him to be any thing above a mere creature—Such as, *that the Father was greater than he*—That the day and hour, when certain things were to take place, *were known, not even to the Son, but to the Father, &c.*—That such express declarations of Christ were enough, in all reason, to remove, from their minds, all apprehensions, that he claimed to be any thing above a creature :—It may be observed, that whatever opinion they had of the exalted dignity of the character of their Lord, they actually considered him as acting in a capacity subordinate to that which, naturally and originally belonged to him. This is evident from the words of the apostle, where he tells us, that Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and *took upon him the form of a servant.* And, if Jesus acted a subordinate part, and in a subordinate character ; his saying that his Father was greater than he, his disciples might justly apprehend, was no otherwise than entirely consistent with his being truly a divine person—God as well as man. And, acting in this subordinate capacity, they might well suppose, that the appointment of *the day and hour* of which Christ speaks, was what did not belong to him : but, to that Father of his, to whom he appeared in the form of a servant. And, that these were, in fact, the apprehensions of the apostle, must be evident from his saying, that he, who was in the form of God, &c. *took on him the form of a servant.* The utter impropriety of saying, that a mere creature, who necessarily and by nature, could be no other than a servant, *took on him such a form*, must have occurred to the Apostle—It might, with equal propriety, be said, that *he took on him existence.*

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The language of Christ to his disciples, and that on

a variety of occasions, was such as might, not only rationally be expected to beget, in them, an opinion, that he claimed to himself a character superior to that of a creature; but, it appears, did, in fact, leave a strong impression on their minds, that Jesus ever meant to avow the claim.

THAT such an impression *was* left on the minds of the apostles, is manifest from the respect they shewed him, after his ascension to heaven.—A respect, which it would be idolatrous to shew to any creature. They paid divine worship to the Lord Jesus by praying to him, and countenanced others in calling on his name, and encouraged them to it. Thus Paul tells us, that, when he was buffeted by the messenger of Satan, he besought the Lord thrice, that it might be taken from him. That *the Lord*, to whom he addressed his prayer, was Christ, is evident from the next words of the apostle. He tells us that he, that is the Lord to whom he addressed his prayer, said unto him, "My grace is "sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect "in weakness." "Most gladly therefore," proceeds the apostle, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, "that *the power of Christ* may rest upon me." 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.—Paul considered that strength, which is made perfect in weakness, to be *the power of Christ*. How naturally, and almost inevitably, would this language, this representation of the apostle, lead those to whom he wrote, to believe, not only that Jesus was the object of religious adoration, but that He, both heard and answered the prayers of his people—That *He, by his grace*, supported and strengthened his people under all their trials. In agreement with this, the Corinthian church well knew, that his first epistle to them was addressed to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place *call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*, both theirs and ours. How naturally will the minds of

Christians, on reading these passages, turn upon that ever memorable and gracious promise of Christ to his disciples, Matt. xviii. 20. "For where two or three "are gathered together in my name, there am I in the "midst of them!"

PAUL was not the only one, who, Christians would naturally believe, paid divine honors and worship to Christ. The first martyr, Stephen, evidently did the same. We are told, that his enemies stoned him, "calling upon, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my "Spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud "voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Acts vii. 59, 60.

BUT these are not the only things, in the writings of the apostles, which, naturally and almost irresistably impress the mind with a belief, that they viewed Jesus as sustaining a character and powers far above those of any mere creature. When relating to the Corinthian Christians, things which took place, among the Jews, in the wilderness; and, speaking of the provocations they offered to God, he tells them, "Now "these things were our examples, to the intent we "should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted— "Neither let us *tempt Christ*, as some of them also "tempted—" 1 Cor. x. 6, 9. He had just before said, that they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and, that *that* Rock was Christ. How naturally, and almost necessarily, would the Corinthians, and Christians in every succeeding age, be led, by such a representation as this, to suppose, that this great apostle viewed Jesus to be the same glorious God and Saviour, who led the people of Israel into the wilderness, and, for their tempting him so often, and in so daring a manner as they did, executed awful judgments on them! It is difficult to conceive, that the apostle should not be aware that his readers would

make such an inference, unless he had taken peculiar care to guard them against it; which he did not.

These things are mentioned to show the reason we have to apprehend, that Jesus left his apostles strongly impressed with a belief, that he was superior to any and every creature;—yea, as John expresses it, that *this is the true God, and eternal life.* The same subject might still be pursued to advantage:—But as it may lead into the argument on the positive evidence, from the holy Scriptures, of the Divinity of Christ, we desist. On this argument it is not designed directly to enter any further, than to mention a number of circumstances and things, which concur to evince, that Jesus left both his friends and enemies, under strong impressions of a belief, that he *claimed* to himself a character and powers, which belong only to the true God.

On the circumstances now mentioned, which were evidently fitted to impress the minds of Christ's disciples with a belief, that he assumed to himself a character above that of a mere creature; and, the evidence that this was their effect; and, their minds indeed left under these impressions; the following observations are submitted, viz.

1. If Jesus had that concern for the honor and glory of the living and true God, which he ever professed, while on earth; it is utterly unaccountable, that he should, either do or say any thing, which should tend, in any measure, to beget an opinion, in his disciples, that he offered himself as an object worthy of divine honors, worship and trust, *were he but a mere creature.*

That Christ really did and said many things, which, not only *greatly tended* to beget an opinion, in

his disciples, that, though possessed of *human nature*, he yet claimed powers and prerogatives, which are peculiar to Deity, but, *actually had this effect;* it is apprehended, is evident from passages of Scripture, which have been already quoted; and, the observations made on them. Christ well knew, that the whole heathen world was now sunk into gross idolatry. He well knew, too, the extreme proneness of God's own, these chosen people, to the same sin; and, the variety of means He had used with them, and the heavy evils and judgments, with which he had, again and again visited them, to break them off, from their idolatries, and to check and cure their wicked thirst after the idols and vanities of other nations. It is, also to be remembered, that the great and professed object of Christ's coming into the world was, to teach the true religion, and the right worship of the one living and true God. How, then, it could be possible, that he should, so often, do and say things, which, not only led the Jews, his enemies, to believe that he assumed to himself an equality with God; but, also, his own chosen witnesses, who were to bear his name through the earth, and be his heralds, among other nations, to publish the true religion, teach the only acceptable worship, and proclaim the way of salvation to perishing sinners.—How all this could be possible, were Jesus but a mere creature, it must be difficult, even to conceive. Yet *that Jesus* who came a light into the world, and of whom it is witnessed, that He was faithful in all God's house, in fact did all this.—He not only died under the imputation, from his enemies, of being guilty of blasphemy in claiming an equality with God; but He finally left his own chosen friends and witnesses under so firm a belief, that He, himself, is the true God and eternal life, that they confidently addressed their prayers and worship to Him; and, readily yielded up their lives in testimony of their having, themselves, embraced, and faithfully

taught the truth, the only truth as it is in Jesus. Further; He left them so strongly impressed with a belief of his true and real Divinity, that their preaching, every where conveyed the same high ideas of his character to all, who embraced the religion and doctrines they taught: And, from them has it been handed down, through every age, to the christian church;—and, almost universally considered as a fundamental article of the christian faith. Thus, the things originally taught by Christ himself, and handed down by the preaching and writings of his apostles and witnesses, have been the means of betraying, almost the whole christian world, ever since, into the most palpable and open idolatry, if it be indeed, *that this Jesus is not truly a divine person, and the proper object of religious worship.*

THAT, neither Jesus himself nor his apostles, who, it is admitted by all who possess a belief in divine revelation, were immediately taught of God, should foresee, that such would be the effect of the doctrines they taught, is what may not be admitted—And, foreseeing, that they should guard, in no other manner than they have done, against it, is a problem, which never has been, and, probably, never will be solved, by those, who deny the divinity of Christ.

2. As the name and character of Jesus were very dear to his disciples, we cannot otherwise believe, than that they would do every thing in their power to wipe off all the aspersions, which were cast upon them by his enemies. They well knew, that the great pretext the Jews had for rejecting him, and putting him to death, was that he claimed to be a divine person. Yea, and one of his most eminent apostles and faithful witnesses had fully united with them in opinion, that Jesus made this claim, and was, therefore, guilty of death.—On this ground only could he

say, as he does, Acts xxvi. 9. I verily though with myself that I ought "to do many things contrary to the "name of Jesus of Nazareth." The apostles, and Paul especially could not but well know, that the claim of Jesus, to be "The Christ, the Son of the "living God," which the Jews, and Paul heretofore with them, had considered as blasphemy, was the great stumbling block in the way of their receiving the gospel. Could this, *to them* stumbling block, be, consistently with truth, taken away, is it supposeable the apostles would not have done it? Can it be believed, that they would have suffered their brethren according to the flesh to persist in rejecting the christian doctrine, through some misapprehensions of the character and claims of its author? And this, too, knowing that this misapprehension was ill founded; and might with the utmost ease, have been removed?

The exceedingly tender concern, which the apostle, Paul particularly, expressed for the Jewish nation, and his ardent wishes for their conversion to christianity, forbid the thought, that he should suffer them to remain under an error, which must prove fatal to them, when it might, with the utmost ease, have been removed, and *that* only by a few words' speaking, without any labored chain of reasoning; and *this* too, when both the glory of God, the character of their dear Lord, and the general interest of his cause, all concurred to require, that an error of so gross and fatal a nature, were it such, should be corrected. Were the apostles and first preachers of the gospel aware, as they could not but be, that the Jews, his enemies apprehended, that Jesus had claimed prerogatives and powers, which are peculiar to God; and, had *professedly for this reason* rejected, and put him to death; to suppose they knowingly left them under such an apprehension, while they themselves were sensible, that it was without any just foundation, must render them

unworthy the character of even common honesty; and, of ever having any credit paid them as messengers of God to a perishing world.

Nor less absurdly can it be supposed, that they would leave the character of Jesus, who was so high in their esteem, and so very near and dear to them, under a load of infamy, not to be wiped off from that time to this, were it true, that he was guilty of the crime, which his enemies laid to his charge, and under the imputation of which he died an ignominious death: And yet the apostles were thoroughly sensible, that, were Jesus but a mere creature, his name and character deserved all this infamy, and must and ought eternally to lie under it.—To suppose, that they had any thing like that friendship to Christ, which they professed, or even common honesty and integrity, renders the thought inadmissible, that they should not have openly and explicitly declared against the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and, considering the charge, and the circumstances under which he died, carefully insist, that Jesus never claimed, either a character or honors above what might be due to a creature; could they have done *this* consistently with truth, and with the apprehensions they, themselves, had of Christ, and of the claims he openly made, while on earth.

Further, we are to recollect that Jesus, before he left the world, promised his apostles to send the *Spirit of truth*, who should guide them into all truth. From *Him* it was, that they received the doctrines they taught: Under *His* direction they both preached and wrote. Nor can it be supposed that, under his direction and guidance, they should both speak and write of their Lord in a manner and in terms, fitted to impress others with an apprehension that they believed him to possess a character and dignity above

any mere creature, unless he in fact did. Yet, that they really did speak of him in such terms, as have left their successors, in general, in every age, under strong and fixed apprehensions, that Christ was believed by them to possess a character and powers truly divine, is what cannot be denied. Had it not been, that the language, in which they speak of their Lord, and of his character, most naturally tended to impress the minds of those, to whom they spoke and wrote, with a belief, that they viewed him as being superior to any mere creature; the labor and pains, which have been taken to remove the apprehensions of it from the minds of men, must have been unnecessary: Nor could there have been occasion for all that criticism, (not to say wresting of scripture) which the enemies to the doctrine of Christ's divinity have made use of, and *that* with comparitively small effect, to convince mankind, that nothing is said, in the sacred writings tending to beget an idea, of the superiority of Jesus to any mere creature. The writers of the New-Testament frequently speak of Jesus in terms, which, their readers, in general believe, cannot be applicable to any mere creature. When they find them speaking of Jesus *as being in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God*—representing him as *the brightness of the glory of God, and the express image of his person*—asserting, that it was He, *who laid the foundation of the earth*, and that *the heavens are the work of his hand*—ascribing *unchangeableness* to him, as that Being who is the same, and whose years shall not fail.—When in addition to all this, they hear them pronouncing the gospel benediction upon all, who in every place, *call on the name of Jesus Christ their Lord;* how can they well suppose any other, than that these writers viewed Jesus as being a person truly divine, worthy of religious worship and adoration!

How can it be believed, that God himself immediately influenced the minds of the apostle to write in such a manner, and to speak in such terms of Jesus, were he but a creature: And, if they were not under the immediate guidance and influence of the spirit of God, nothing which they said or wrote, may be considered as of divine authority; nor, ought to have any other weight, than the *mere opinion* of weak, imperfect and fallible men.

And, to suppose that Jesus himself should influence his Apostles to such an opinion of his person and character, either while he was personally with them, or after his ascension, *were he but a mere creature;* and to go and spread it all over the earth, and transmit it to the latest generation; must naturally lead us to view him in no better light, than his enemies did, while he was on earth—*a deceiver.* Then is the authority of Christ in matters of faith, and that of the writers of the New-Testament, both, effectually set aside.

It may deserve to be still further noticed, that, if Jesus be but a mere creature, all who, in any age, have paid divine worship and honors to him, must, according to the express decision of the holy Scriptures, be excluded from the kingdom of heaven, and perish. Nothing is more clearly and expressly asserted than this. Paul says, 1 Cor. vi. 9, "Know ye not that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of "God: be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor "*idolaters*—shall inherit the kingdom of God." We are told, also, Rev. xxi. 8, that "the fearful, and un-"believing, and *idolaters*—shall have their part in the "lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone; which "is the second death." And again, Rev. xxii. 15, that "without are murderers and *idolaters.*"

THAT there have been many, in every age of the christian church, and are, at the present day, who do in fact, and that designedly and intentionally, pay divine honors and worship to the Lord Jesus Christ, is what cannot be denied: And, that this is open and gross idolatry, if he be but a creature, will admit of no dispute. This is not only a direct violation of the first and great commandment of the law; but they, who are guilty of it, and sustain the character of idolaters, are most expressly excluded from the kingdom of heaven, and condemned to suffer the pains of the second death.

ON the hypothesis that Jesus of Nazareth be but a creature, what ground of charity can we have for any, who, in any age, have paid divine honors and worship to him! What are we to think of the thief on the cross, and of the first martyr, Stephen, who in their dying moments, commended themselves and their departing spirits to Christ! What, of the apostle Paul, who counted all things but dung, that he might win Christ and be found in him!—Who, under the trials and temptations, which he endured in the cause and service of Christ, prayed to *Him* for needed supports and strength and grace! Yea, what, of all those eminent saints and servants of his, who, in every succeeding age, have paid religious worship and adoration to Christ, and trusted their everlasting concerns to him! Judging according to the express rules of the word of God, How can we believe any other, than that they are excluded from the kingdom of heaven!

To say, that we may and ought to have charity for such, because, though deluded, yet *sincere*, necessarily goes to a denial, that *any articles of faith whatever are necessary;* and, opens the door for our charity and fellowship with papists, mahometans, pagans and infidels; because all these, as well as the worshippers of

the Lord Jesus Christ, may be *sincere* in their several and different professions. Yea, it goes as effectually to a denial of the divine authority of the holy Scriptures; because, we there find all idolaters most explicitly excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

Nor can it be uninteresting to our present argument, here, to remark the utter impropriety of christian communion and fellowship between those, who believe in the real Divinity of Jesus Christ, and those, who do not. It is as really inconsistent and unwarrantable for Arians and Socinians to have charity for such as believe the Lord Jesus to be truly God as well as man, as it is for the friends of this doctrine to hold christian fellowship with them. If it be, that the sentiments of the former are scriptural, the latter are open and wilful idolaters. If those, of the latter, are agreeable to the oracles of God, the consequence is undeniable, that the former deny the Lord who bought them—And, by denying the Son, they, also, deny the Father. For the enemies to the doctrine of Christ's Divinity to have christian fellowship with its friends, is to become partakers with them in their supposed idolatry: And, for the latter to hold christian communion with the former, is to treat this great doctrine with manifest indifference, and as of no importance to the salvation of sinners, either one way or the other. Yea, the language of this fellowship with such as deny the Divinity of Christ, is, that though he be truly God, it is immaterial whether we acknowledge and worship him as such; or, view and treat him as such, but, like ourselves, a mere creature. If Christ be truly God as well as man, the obligation to acknowledge and worship him as God will not be denied. Hence the utter inconsistency there is, that the friends to this doctrine should hold christian fellowship and communion with such as deny and reject it, must be obvious. Nor is it less obvious, that the rejecters of

the doctrine of Christ's real Divinity become partakers of the idolatry of such as pay divine honors to him, by holding christian fellowship with them, if he be indeed but a mere creature: And, on their own principles, they cannot but consider the language of God to them, to be, "Come out from among them, "and be ye separate, saith the Lord."

If, to pray to Jesus Christ, and to worship him, be idolatry, it must be manifest from the passages of Scripture already quoted, that his apostles, and the primitive Christians were guilty of the sin. Nor, on this hypothesis, can it be denied, that the greater part of Christians, in every succeeding age, have been idolaters. That the writings and examples of Christ's apostles have been actually followed by this effect, will not be denied:—Nor can it be much less obvious, that they greatly tended, and were exceedingly fitted to produce it, in such as received their writings as the oracles of God. And if it be true, that the writings of, both the evangelists and apostles had, even any considerable tendency to this effect, on such as received them as authorities in matters of faith; this is a consideration sufficient of itself to take away their credibility, as being divinely inspired. For none can suppose, that writings divinely inspired for the benefit and direction of mankind, and *that* in their infinitely most important concerns, would not be most clearly and sufficiently guarded against a construction, and an effect, utterly subversive of all their benefit, and of the design for which they were inspired.

The effect, which the examples and writings of the immediate authors of the New-Testament has actually had, on far the greater part of mankind, in every age, who have received them as of divine authority, seems to be a sufficient proof of their tendency, to produce a belief of the Divinity of Christ, and to en-

gage his followers to pay divine honors to him. For, though there be a *strong disposition* in men, naturally, to pervert divine truth; when we reflect, that those of the most exemplary piety, as well as of the first abilities, have generally received, and consientiously adhered to the doctrine of Christ's true and real Divinity, *this* will be quite insufficient so far to acquit those writings of such a degree of tendency to this effect, as is enough to destroy their credit as being of divine original.—This being the case, it cannot but be unsafe to embrace the gospel as an infallible guide in matters of faith.

THAT Jesus Christ knew that, both his friends, and his enemies believed him to assume a character, and to receive honors, while he was on earth, which can belong to no mere creature, cannot reasonably be denied—The evidence of it is such, as must carry conviction to candid minds. That he never said or did any thing, which actually removed the apprehensions they had of his claiming these honors is equally clear and obvious.

THAT He should do no more than it can, in any wise be pretended he, in fact, did, to silence the murmurs of enemies, and correct the errors of his friends, when it could have been done *with a word's speaking* were he but a mere creature; is what will be, with great difficulty, accounted for by those, who reject the doctrine of his true and real Divinity. Instead of this, he persisted to speak of himself in such terms, and to admit such honors to be done him, as can admit of no excuse *if he be but a creature;* and, can by no means be reconciled with common honesty, much less, with real piety.

AFTER a careful and candid attention to the language, in which Jesus frequently spoke of himself, and

to the instances of respect and worship, which he often admitted to be paid him; who can believe him worthy to be received as a teacher come from God, *if he be in fact no more than a creature!* Instead of this, how can he be viewed in any other light, than that of a deceiver—yea, the greatest impostor that ever came into the world!

On what ground, they who deny the true and real Divinity of Christ, can censure and condemn the *ancient* Jews for putting him to death, and their *present* existing descendants, for rejecting him, is not easily seen. Instead of removing *their* objections against Christianity—An object, which Arians and Socinians profesedly have in view, in their labors in opposition to the doctrine of Christ's Divinity—there must be reason to fear, that they, themselves, split upon the rock, which has been so fatal to the Jews; and that to them, as well as to the Jews, Christ is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.

If it be true, that Christ has given *even just grounds to suspect* that he claimed to possess prerogatives and powers, which can belong to no mere creature; it will be an imputation on his character *as a teacher from God*, which never can be wiped off, if he be but a creature. A *creature*, who will do this, at once forfeits all right to credit. That Christ in fact did this, is too clear and obvious to admit of controversy. The consequence is irresistable, that *if he be but a creature*, he is utterly unworthy to be received as a teacher sent from God. This being the case, it is obvious that no credit is to be paid to his instructions and doctrines; and, that the system of religion founded on what was taught by Christ and his apostles, has no just foundation for its support. So obviously does the *christian system* rest on the truth of the real Divinity of its glorious Author; and, must stand or fall with it! Take

away *this corner-Stone*, the whole fabrick at once falls to the ground !

If the evidence of *Christianity* be taken away, none, excepting Jews, will pretend that we have any revelation from God. And, if the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, are an imposition, it may readily be concluded that, those of Moses and the prophets are no better. In this way does it *again* appear, that, by rejecting the doctrine of the true and real Divinity of Christ, we are necessarily turned back to our original heathenish state ; and, left without any other or better guide, than the weak, perverted reason of wicked and fallible men ! On this hypothesis, what the moral character of that Being, who made all things, is, as it never has, so never, in this world, will it be discovered. And, of consequence, we must remain strangers to the nature and kind of that worship, which he requires and will accept, if there be any such : Or, whether there be, or will be any state of future existence—of punishments, or rewards. These infinitely interesting and important subjects, must, all, lie in the dark ; as they ever would have done, had no immediate revelation been made from heaven. And we are far from having any satisfactory evidence, that such revelation has ever been made to men, if Jesus of Nazareth did not in fact, possess those prerogatives and powers, which, it is manifest, both his friends and his enemies believed him to claim.

A BRIEF Summary of the preceding argument shall conclude the subject.

It has been urged that, if Christ be not truly a divine person, God as well as man, there is no *atonement* made for the sins of men—No manifestation, in the government of God, of that divine displeasure and anger against the characters and conduct of such as

are saved by Christ, as the threatenings of the word of God necessarily lead us to suppose do actually exist. If this displeasure do not appear in the death and sufferings of Him *who was sacrificed for his people*, it no where appears—There is no manifestation of it. It must, follow, of course, that Christ is not *The Lord their righteousness*—That it is not on account of any legal righteousness, any honor whatever done to the *holy law of God as sanctioned by the penalty of his eternal anger for every transgression*, that penitents are pardoned and saved.

If any of mankind are saved without God's exhibiting in his government, that displeasure with them, which the threatenings of his word import; the evidence of *grace* in their salvation is quite taken away: For *grace*, in good conferred on creatures, can no further appear, than we have evidence, that God, who judges righteous judgment, views them as deserving of evil. Hence it must be evident, that a denial of the doctrine of *atonement* by the death of Christ, renders the Scripture doctrine of the salvation of sinners *by grace* quite unintelligible; if it do not wholly subvert it. To suppose the *penitence* of a sinner to be the consideration on which he is saved and again received to favor, is equally inconsistent with all ideas of *grace* in his salvation. For this would imply, either that he was the object of no other or greater displeasure of God, than might be removed by his penitence and return to obedience; or, that the law of God and the rule of his government are such, as to subject no one to punishment, but on neglect or refusal of repentance. But if the penitence of the transgressor remove all existing divine displeasure with him, we can, surely, see no evidence of *grace* in his being received to favor. And, if the law of God and the rule of his government are such, that they subject no one to punishment, nor render any obnoxious to it, but final ob-

stinate impenitents; it is obvious, that such as do repent are exposed *by law* to no evil or curse; and consequently, no *act of grace* is needed for their being restored to the favor of God, and made forever happy in him. Or should it be supposed, that God pardons *absolutely*, without making any honor done to his violated law, either by the work and death of Christ, or the penitence of the sinner, the consideration on which his favor is bestowed; the evidence, that sinners are saved *by grace* is greatly diminished, if not wholly done away. For *in this case* we can see no certain proof, that they ever were the objects of any great degree of divine displeasure, if any at all. And, indeed, if the death and sufferings of Christ were not an atonement for sin—If his people are not saved from the curse of the law by his being made a curse for them, *we* can discern no necessity for his coming and work in order to the salvation of sinners—Nor, how Christ crucified is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

If the Divinity and atonement of Christ be denied, the forgiveness of sin *on any hypothesis whatever that we can form*, must evidently set aside the revealed moral law *sanctioned by promises and threatenings*, as a rule of divine administration and government. If there be not manifestations of divine displeasure and anger in the instances wherein they are threatened in the word of God, and to the degree, which the threatenings import; we cannot but apprehend a disagreement between the *word* and the *government* of God.—And as far as any one apprehends there is such a disagreement, he will feel himself at liberty to form his own ideas of the moral character of God, and no longer make his written word the rule of his faith.

Further; if that divine displeasure, with which sinners universally are threatened in the word of God, be never manifested against the characters and con-

duct of believers in Christ—If it be never to appear, that the innumerable multitude saved by Christ are, in themselves, and in the divine estimation, as deserving of eternal ruin, as those, who finally perish; we are naturally led to the conclusion, to which such as deny the Divinity of Christ probably mean to come,—that there will be no future state of punishment. And whenever it comes to be believed, that the threatenings of the word of God will never be executed—That the divine displeasure, which they import, will never be expressed in its natural and genuine fruits—These threatenings cease to be motives of action, and immediately lose their influence to restrain. And whenever the *threatenings* contained in the holy Scriptures cease to operate as motives of action, the *promises* must, of course, lose their influence. And when the ground of our faith, in both threatenings and promises, is taken away, there is nothing left in the Bible worthy of credit as a revelation from God.

STILL further; as moral creatures, at least while in a state of probation, are ever governed by *motive*, and influenced by prospects of good and evil; we, no sooner give up the promises and threatenings of the word of God, than we become utter strangers, both to the nature, and the rules of that moral government, which is exercised over us—And, indeed, to the evidence, that we live under such a government. And, as we lose sight of *evidence*, that a moral government is exercised over us, we do also, to the same degree, *of the existence* of a moral Governor of the world.

THESE appear to be but the natural and genuine consequences of a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

IT has been further urged, that, on supposition Christ be but a creature, it will be extremely difficult, if not utterly impossible to reconcile many parts of

his conduct with the character of, even an honest man. That many things, which Jesus said and did while on earth, left the minds, both of his friends and enemies, strongly impressed with a belief, that he *claimed* to himself prerogatives and powers, which can belong to no mere creature, cannot justly be denied. It was *this*, and this only, that furnished the Jews with any tolerable pretext for putting him to death. That they verily believed, that Jesus made such claims as they, often and often, charged him with it, cannot reasonably be questioned. That Christ should hear himself, again and again, charged with being a blasphemer, and yet in no instance remove what he well knew his enemies considered as a just ground for the charge, is utterly unaccountable, if he did not mean ever to challenge that, which would have been just ground for the charge, were he no more than a creature. But, above all, is it utterly unaccountable, that Christ should suffer himself to be put to death for claiming a character and powers, which can belong to no mere creature, if he meant no such claim—And, instead of renouncing every thing, which could possibly excite suspicion that he assumed so high a character to himself, that he should, while under examination on the subject before the high priest, say things, which he could not but know were directly fitted to strengthen and confirm them in the belief, that he claimed to be the Son of God in a sense, which they considered it as blasphemous for any mere creature to pretend to be—And all this, when he could, with the utmost ease, and that by a word, have removed every pretext for the accusation made by his enemies, is what cannot be accounted for on any principles whatever, consistently with his being an honest man; unless, also, he is something more than man, even the true God and eternal life.

THAT he left his particular friends and followers

impressed with the fullest and firmest belief, that he possessed perfections and powers, which distinguished him from all mere creatures, and proved him to possess a nature, which is truly divine; there appear the strongest reasons to believe. Accordingly, he received that respect and worship from them, before he left the world, which it would have been impious for any mere creature to admit to be paid to him. He made promises of what *he would do for them* after his ascension, which, they well knew, it required Almighty power and universal dominion, to enable him to accomplish. Prayer was addressed directly to him, by his disciples, and graciously answered by him. The apostles, whom he commissioned to go and preach the gospel to every creature, ever spoke of him in terms, and attributed a character to him, which they could not otherwise than believe, would lead all, who embraced the doctrines they taught, to view him as an object of supreme love, and of religious worship and adoration—as well as to place the fullest and most entire confidence in him. Yea, they considered prayer to Christ calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, as, in those days, a distinguishing mark of a christian.

Now, that Jesus himself should direct and authorize his apostles to exhibit him under a character, in their preaching and doctrines which he could not but foresee and know, would greatly tend to render him an object of idolatrous respects; *were he but a mere creature*, is itself enough to take away all confidence in his honesty and integrity—especially, as one great object of the coming of the Messiah was foretold to be, to destroy the idols, and to put away idolatrous worship.

That the apostles and first preachers of christianity, who appeared most strongly attached to the person and interest of their Lord and Saviour, should leave his character under the *stigma* of his having died a blas-

phemer; while they, themselves, well knew, that he claimed no powers and prerogatives, but such as may belong to a creature; is, of itself, enough to destroy all confidence in them, either as being inspired, or even honest men.

THESE considerations are sufficient to show, that, if Christ be not truly a divine person, neither he, nor his apostles can deserve our credit—The evidence that his gospel is from God is taken away—And we are left in the dark, and wholly without a guide, in matters of infinite importance, and which most highly, as well as everlastingly concern us.

THE END.

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